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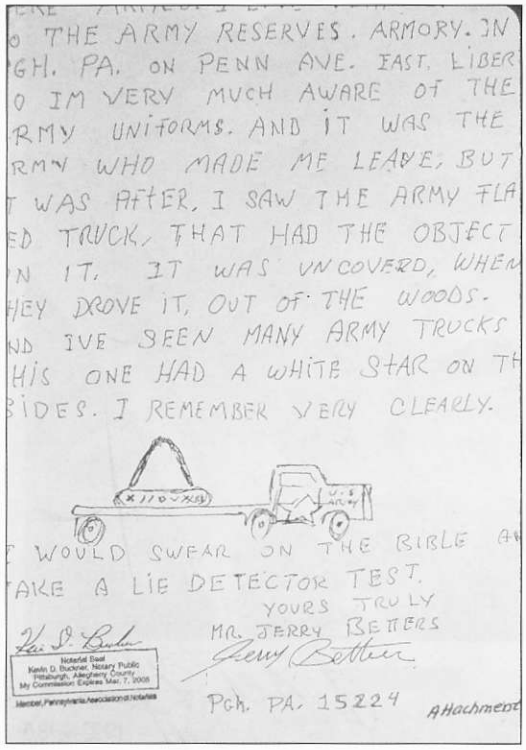
International UFO Reporter

Volume 30, Number 1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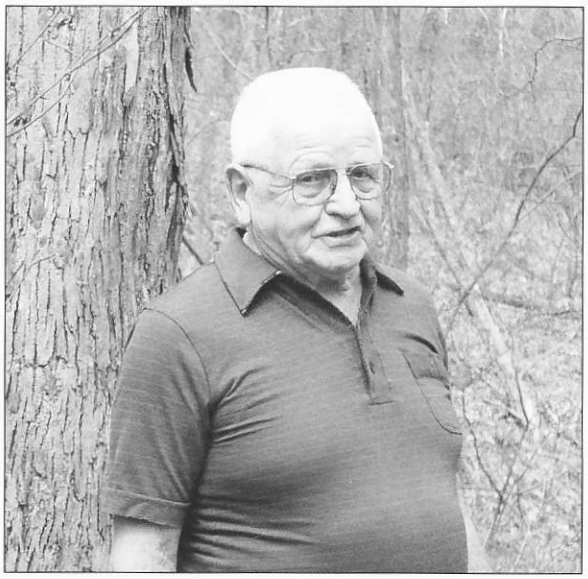
ND IVE SEEN MANY ARMY TRUCKS
HIS ONE HAD A WHITE STAR ON TH
IDES. I REMEMBER VERY CLEARLY.

I WOULD SWEAR ON THE BIBLE AN
TAKE A LIE DETECTOR TEST.
YOURS TRULY
MR. JERRY BETTERS
Pgh. PA. 15224
Attachment

Artist's conception (above) by Charles Hanna of the object that crashed near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, December 9, 1965. Statement of jazz musician Jerry Betters (left), who was ordered at gunpoint to leave the area after he and his friends saw a large acorn-shaped object on the back of an Army flatbed truck the night of the alleged UFO crash.



Nearby resident Bill Bulebush saw the object descend and located it before the military arrived.

John Podesta, White House chief of staff under President Clinton, backs the Kecksburg initiative.

FORTY YEARS OF SECRECY: NASA, THE MILITARY, AND THE 1965 KECKSBURG CRASH

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

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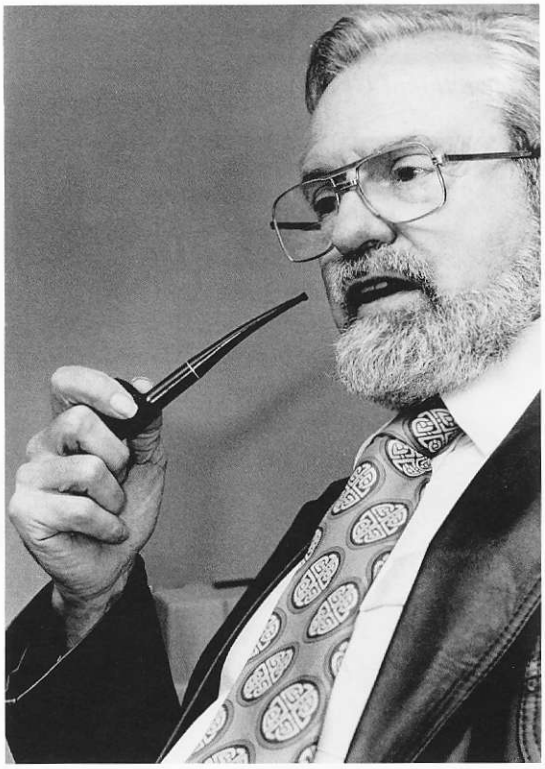

J. Allen Hynek
1910-1986

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Published in October 2005.

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Address all article submissions, letters to the editor, and other editorial correspondence to *International UFO Reporter*, Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659. Address all subscription correspondence to *International UFO Reporter*, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659.

The *International UFO Reporter* is a benefit publication mailed to Associates of the Center for a contribution of $25.00 or more. Foreign Associates add $5.00 for delivery. All amounts in U.S. funds. Other publications also available for contributors of larger amounts. For details, write to the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659, USA.

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to CUFOS, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659.

FORTY YEARS OF SECRECY: NASA, THE MILITARY, AND THE 1965 KECKSBURG CRASH

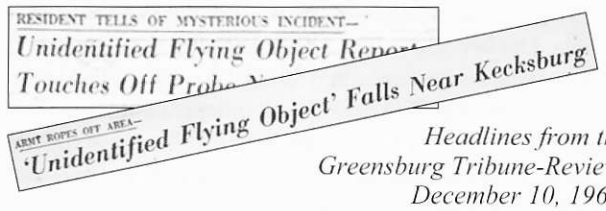
BY LESLIE KEAN

This December marks the 40th anniversary of one of the most thoroughly researched and intriguing crash/retrieval cases in America. Despite a top-notch investigation spanning more than three decades and world-wide attention in recent years from a new campaign probing the case, the Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, UFO crash of 1965 remains unsolved, due mainly to the stubborn silence of American government agencies.

Unlike the Roswell crash, this case has been relatively uncontaminated by commercialism and the popular media. It does not feature bodies found at the scene; it involves an atypical object, suggesting a range of explanations; and it includes many living witnesses. The central witnesses remain unknown to most people interested in UFOs, and none of them have benefited from coming forward. Also in contrast to the Roswell case, the dramatic military response to the crash was reported by television, radio, and newspapers as it developed, and was witnessed by hundreds of people who descended on the tiny town from miles around. Unfortunately, no high-level Army, Air Force, or intelligence personnel involved with the Kecksburg retrieval have come forward in any way that can be of use to the case, as they did for the Roswell case many years after it occurred.

The sheer volume of witness and local news reports show that on December 9, 1965, an object landed near the village of Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, about 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, after being observed as a fireball in the sky across several U.S. states and Canada. Some Pennsylvania residents saw the object moving slowly in the sky; others saw smoke and brilliant bluish-white lights like an electric arc when it first crashed. Five witnesses eventually provided independent, corroborated descriptions of the object and its exact location in the woods. Dozens of others—including

Leslie Kean is an investigative journalist who has published pieces related to the UFO subject for the Boston Globe *and the* Providence Journal, *and through wide distribution by the New York Times and Knight Ridder-Tribune wire services.*


RESIDENT TELLS OF MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT—
Unidentified Flying Object Report
Touches Off Probe
ARMY ROPES OFF AREA—
'Unidentified Flying Object' Falls Near Kecksburg

Headlines from the Greensburg Tribune-Review, December 10, 1965.

firefighters, newspaper reporters, and a radio news director at radio station WHJB (who was on the scene taping interviews)—describe the large military and police presence at the impact site and the cordoning off of the area. Observers provided detailed descriptions of an object being transported out on a flatbed truck. Many witnesses have signed statements for investigator Stan Gordon of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, who has been working on the case for over three decades. (See his website at www.stangordon.com.)

To this day, no one knows what triggered the interest of the U.S. military, or why the Army was so intent on hiding the object that it threatened civilians with weapons. The subsequent Air Force denial that anything at all came down is even more perplexing, and has led to heated speculation. In the ensuing 40 years, members of the once tightly knit community in rural Pennsylvania have been torn apart by the continuing unanswered questions about what happened. As American citizens, they have not been granted the information due them by law under the Freedom of Information Act. This case addresses issues that go beyond the question of determining the origin of the strange object that—as indicated by so many accounts—was recovered by our government that night.

However, two exciting breakthroughs occurred in 2003 that have moved the investigation forward many steps: a scientist's discovery of physical evidence showing that something crashed through the trees in 1965 at the location designated by witnesses; and the elimination of the possibility that the object was a Russian satellite or any man-made object at all, according to the world's leading authority on space systems. These two developments demolish the two preferred explanations used by the skeptics—that the object was either a meteor (the Air Force explanation) or a Russian satellite—and heighten the mystery by further reducing

Sci Fi Channel

The full CFi team, including Larry Landsman (far left), Lee Helfrich (second from left), and Stan Gordon (far right), at a Washington, D.C., press conference in October 2003.

possible conventional explanations.

These breakthroughs occurred after the Sci Fi Channel launched its historic "UFO Advocacy Initiative" in which, for a few years, unprecedented resources were applied to the investigation of a UFO case. As an independent journalist, I was asked by Larrry Landsman, Sci Fi's director of special projects, to spearhead an effort seeking new government records on a well-documented American UFO case that included the retrieval of physical evidence. The Kecksburg incident satisfied these and other criteria used to select a case, and the Washington law firm Lobel, Novins & Lamont came on board to assist with FOIA appeals and lawsuits, if they should become necessary. "This was, and still is, a freedom of information story," says Landsman. "Many witnesses say something occurred that night, and so we provided our support to those investigating."

In addition, a private investigator who formerly worked for the congressional General Accounting Office and an independent archival research firm joined the team, expanding the scope of the investigation beyond FOIA. Working with the Washington public relations firm PodestaMattoon, the core group undertaking this project called itself the Coalition for Freedom of Information (CFi), for which I was appointed director of investigations. See our website at www.freedomofinfo.org.

The CFi Kecksburg initiative won the support of Washington insider John Podesta, President Clinton's former chief of staff and member of the 1997 Moynihan Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy, who at the time was a law professor at Georgetown University and now heads the Center for American Progress. Podesta was instrumental in the declassification of 800 million pages of documents during the Clinton administration and is an outspoken critic of unnecessary government secrecy. "This initiative will help keep the pressure on," he explained.

"I think it's time to open the books on questions that have remained in the dark, on the question of government investigations of UFOs," Podesta told the media at CFi's first press conference launching the Kecksburg initiative in October 2002. "It's time to find out what the truth really is that's out there. We ought to do it because it's right; we ought to do it because the American people quite frankly can handle the truth; and we ought to do it because it's the law."

"Clinton Aide Slams Pentagon's UFO Secrecy" was the headline on the CNN story that day. "The new initiative is not setting out to prove the existence of aliens. Rather the group wants to legitimize the scientific investigation of unexplained aerial phenomena," CNN reported. "Podesta was one of numerous political and media heavyweights on hand in Washington, D.C., to announce a new group to gain access to secret government records about UFOs."

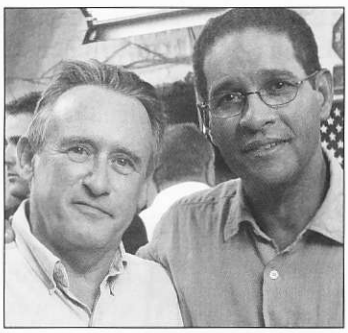
"UFO FALLS NEAR KECKSBURG"

The CFi campaign could not have proceeded without the solid base of meticulous work on the Kecksburg case performed by researcher Stan Gordon for close to 40 years.

Gordon's curiosity was piqued when, as a teenager in nearby Greensburg, he spent the evening of December 9, 1965, glued to the radio and television as events unfolded. He heard reports that something crashed in the woods near the tiny village of Kecksburg at approximately 4:45 p.m. that evening, after being seen over a number of other states and Canada. "Many persons in the Greensburg area saw the phenomena. State police say there is a fire in the Kecksburg area. They are investigating," said the 9 o'clock news on KDKA radio in Pittsburgh.

On his black-and-white TV, Gordon watched the local news and occasional special bulletins that broke into regular programming to state that the military had arrived on the scene and that the area was cordoned off. A search was underway to locate the object.

"Unidentified Flying Object Falls near Kecksburg, Army Ropes off Area" exclaimed the front-page headline on the *Greensburg Tribune-Review* the next morning. The article said that "the area where the object landed was immediately sealed off on the order of U.S. Army and State Police officials, reportedly in anticipation of a close inspection of whatever may have fallen." U.S. Army engineers and scientists were brought in. "Excitement caused by the apparent landing produced a massive traffic jam," as hundreds drove to the site from surrounding areas.



Tribune-Review reporter Robert Gatty (left) with news anchor Bryant Gumbel, host of the Sci Fi Channel documentary on Kecksburg.

Tribune-Review reporter Robert Gatty interviewed an eight-year-old boy who saw the object fall into the woods, and his mother, Mrs. Arnold Kalp, who saw blue smoke rising and

alerted the authorities. Gatty's December 10 story, headlined "Unidentified Flying Object Report Touches off Probe near Kecksburg," recounts that he was denied access to the site, by order of the Army.

Gatty's stories were quickly superseded by reports in numerous late-edition papers with the headlines "Searchers Fail to Find Object" and "Fireball a Meteor, Astronomer Explains." Reports said that 25 state policemen and members of Army and Air Force searched a 75-acre area until 2 a.m. and found nothing. The Air Force explained the incident as "a meteor or meteors," adding that "there has been no evidence of space debris . . . and all aircraft and missiles have been accounted for."

In a recent interview, Gatty said that his editor sent him out that night to cover "the story of the century," and that he is convinced something did indeed come down in the Kecksburg woods. "The Army appeared to be protecting something," he wrote in a 2003 statement for a CFi press conference. "At this point in time, nearly 40 years later, what possibly could be the reason for continuing this cover-up?"

Mabel Mazza

Reporter John Murphy, news director for local radio station WHJB, made it down to the site before the authorities arrived, in response to a flood of calls from alarmed citizens to the station. His former wife Bonnie Milslagle (Murphy died in 1969) and WHJB office manager Mabel Mazza both later reported that Murphy had photographed the object.

"He got down there before the police, before any of the armed forces were there," said Milslagle. "He called me and told me he'd gotten pictures of it, but some of the film had been confiscated. But he'd gotten one roll through."

Mazza says she saw one picture. "It was very dark and it was with a lot of trees around and everything. And I don't know how far away from the site he was. But I did see a picture of a sort of a cone-like thing. It's the only time I ever saw it," she said.

In the weeks that followed, Murphy became obsessed with the case and developed a radio documentary called "Object in the Woods" that included interviews conducted that night. One day, he received an unexpected visit from authorities in plain clothes. WHJB employee Linda Foschia recalls that some of Murphy's tapes were confiscated; no one knows what happened to the photographs. A week after this visit, which left him at first very agitated and then uncharacteristically despondent and depressed, Murphy aired a censored version of the original documentary. Some interviewees had requested he remove them from the broadcast due to fears of getting in trouble with the police and the Army, Murphy explained on the air. (The sudden fear of these previously forthcoming sources, initially excited by the mysterious event as was Murphy, raises the possibility that they too were visited by intimidating officials.)

After airing the documentary, Murphy clammed up and would no longer talk about what had initially been the story of his lifetime, according to his wife. Yet Murphy had no idea how important his special documentary report would become to investigators years later, providing an intriguing, first-hand window into the drama as it unfolded. The resolute reporter did everything he possibly could to probe and document the story. In the beginning of the piece, for example, he provides the crucial fact that "the control tower at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport definitely confirmed the fact that there was an object in the sky at that time, 13 minutes before 5."

"Object in the Woods" chronicles Murphy's movements and encounters throughout the evening in great detail. At 8:30 p.m., after arriving on the scene at Kecksburg, he saw State Police Fire Marshal Carl Metz and another investigator go into the woods with a Geiger counter and flashlight, returning up the hill 16 minutes later. While Metz headed for his car, Murphy stopped him where no one else could hear and asked if he had found anything. "He looked puzzled for a second and said, I'm not sure," Murphy says in the broadcast. Murphy then decided to ask the question in a different way. "After you make your report to the captain, do you think you or the captain, perhaps, may have something to tell me? And he [Metz] said, 'You better get your information from the Army.'" Sounding a bit stunned by this statement, Murphy makes the point that it was "very unusual" for the fire marshal, examining a fire "in almost a clear blue sky," to turn him over to the United States Army, indicating that something there in the woods "showed some significance of military value."

A little later, at the Greensburg State Police barracks, Murphy reports that he saw members of the army and the air force there in uniform, along with Carl Metz. The captain told him that he had an official statement for the record: the state police had conducted a thorough search and "there was nothing whatsoever in the woods." Murphy called this in to WHJB headquarters for broadcast during the station's ongoing news coverage of unfolding events. When Metz and others then got ready to leave the barracks and return to the wooded area a second time, Metz told Murphy that he could go with the group to the location.

While Murphy waited in his car to follow the caravan of vehicles heading to Kecksburg, a state police officer came from the barracks and approached him. "We got something out there," the officer told the radio news director, only moments after the release of the official statement to the contrary. "It's blue and it's pulsating and there's a light on it," he said, adding that the military wanted to go see this pulsating light. Murphy notes that this report matched earlier eyewitness descriptions of blue lights emanating from the woods right after the object landed and that, in fact, several people said they saw a light. "I myself did not see any

Stan Gordon

Photos of damaged trees near the crash location which were used by scientists in 2003 to locate the site and conduct a forensic investigation revealing new, physical evidence.

particular light that I could have definitely said was the light everybody was referring to," he adds.

When they finally arrived back at the scene of the crash, Metz firmly forbade Murphy to accompany them into the woods, and, despite Murphy's pleading for permission based on his earlier invitation, Metz offered no explanation for the sudden change.

The witnesses

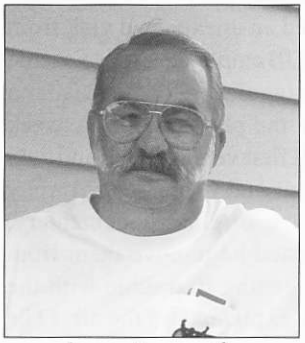
During the following decades, Stan Gordon, interviewing countless people with varying levels of involvement, became increasingly unable to accept the official explanation that what was seen in the sky was a meteor, and that nothing at all came down. For example, Pennsylvania residents saw the object moving slowly and making turns, as if under intelligent control. Randy Overly told Gordon that the object passed about 200 feet over his head and stayed level, maintaining the same height the whole time, moving about as fast as a single-engine plane. The acorn-shaped, brownish object made a hissing sound as it spewed greenish fire from its rear, which terrified the young Overly and his friend.

Bill Bulebush said he was working on his car in nearby Mammoth when he saw the object hesitate and make a turn before descending into the woods. He and other observers saw the object go down slowly, as if controlled.

Hundreds of people, along with the media, witnessed different aspects of the extensive military and state police presence in the area that night. Fireman Bob Bitner saw a small convoy of military trucks going into the ravine and coming out later, and was refused permission to go into the woods himself. From his nearby upstairs bedroom window, young John Hays watched a spectacle of flashlights, cars, and trucks going into the woods while military officials gathered in his living room downstairs, talking in small groups and using his parents' telephone. These are just a few of the many independent reports Gordon acquired following the event, all in great detail.

Later that night, witnesses saw an object transported out of the area at great speed on the back of a military flatbed tractor-trailer truck. "Not only did we see the flatbed going up empty, we saw the flatbed coming down—loaded," reports Mike Slater, who said that Army officials asked him to provide false directions to people looking for the crash site. Sometimes these officials pointed guns at civilians when they were too close to the barricades.

Jazz musician Jerry Betters said he was harshly ordered at gunpoint to leave the area after he and his friends caught a glimpse of an acorn-shaped object, "a little bigger than a Volkswagen," on the back of an Army flatbed truck as it struggled up through a field. For some reason, it was not fully covered. "I could see this hieroglyphic stuff all on the back," Betters said. "I would swear on the Bible and take a lie detector test," he wrote in a notarized statement with a drawing, for one of CFi's FOIA requests to the Army.



James Romansky

Bob Bitner

Firefighter James Romansky saw the flatbed truck speeding down the hill in a military convoy, past the Kecksburg firehouse. "I and many others could see the object and its shape under the tarpaulin. There is no meteorite in the world that looks like that," Romansky said in a recent interview.

Romansky, one of the very first to see the object on the ground before the military arrived, has been a crucial witness, providing a detailed description from a few feet away. He said he saw a bronze-colored, acorn-shaped object with no windows, doors, or seams, partially buried in a gully. It was about 10–12 feet tall, large enough for a man to stand up in, and 8–12 feet in diameter. Romansky said he saw strange symbols that looked like Egyptian hieroglyphics on the back, or "bumper area" of the acorn. He stayed on the scene with a group of firemen until ordered to leave by two men in trench coats followed by uniformed military.

In August 1987, Romansky was the first witness to take Gordon to the impact site, which turned out to be the same area where Gordon had previously photographed damaged trees. Six months later, John Hayes escorted Gordon to the same location, where as a boy he had seen the disturbed area around the wash the morning after the object was removed. In 1988, Gordon received a tip that Bulebush had also approached the object at close range. After providing Gordon with a detailed description, Bulebush went into the woods to find the location from a different entry point than that used by Romansky. He found a particular tree that he remembered, and pointed to the exact same spot in the streambed that Romansky and Hayes had previously identified.

The most extraordinary part of this story is that Romansky, Hayes, and Bulebush independently took Gordon to the same location, without having ever discussed the case among themselves, and each had no idea what the other had said to Gordon. The descriptions of the object provided by Romansky and Bulebush (who had never even met at the time) were extremely similar. Since then, three additional people have reported to Gordon that they too saw the object before it was removed from the ground, although they are not willing to go public.

State Police Fire Marshal Carl Metz, whom John Murphy witnessed going into the wooded impact area twice that evening, apparently saw something extraordinary but kept the information close to his chest until his death in 1989. Former Pennsylvania State Trooper Bob Koveleskie, who was working in eastern Pennsylvania that night, says that he asked Metz shortly after the event what had happened, and Metz replied that he was sworn to secrecy by the Army and couldn't discuss it. Years later, former Greensburg Police Dispatcher Howard Burns reported in a videotaped interview with Gordon that Metz took part in a group discussion at the Greensburg police station in the early 1980s. Burns says that Metz told the group that he was one of the first at the Kecksburg impact area and initially thought he had came upon a crashed aircraft due to the tree damage. According to Burns, Metz reported that when he saw the object close up, "it was like no object he had ever seen before" and he was ordered not to talk about it. Burns says Metz wasn't revealing everything he knew by keeping the details secret. He wouldn't say what it was—only that it was like nothing he had ever seen before. Both Kovaleskie and Burns told Gordon on tape that Metz was highly respected, honest and had great integrity, and that they would believe anything he said.

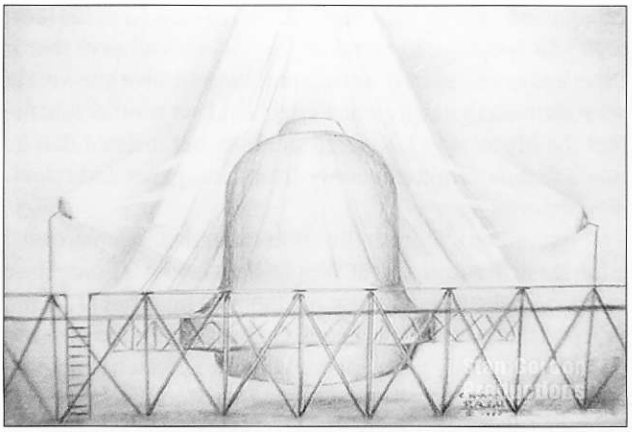
In April 2005, Gordon interviewed another retired police officer with an extensive and distinguished law enforcement background who verified that he also spoke to Metz, a good friend at the time, within a day or two of the incident. Metz told him that he had seen the object in the woods.

"Multitudes of people had some association with this incident," says Gordon. "Most do not accept the government's explanation." If this were simply a meteor, then these witnesses to the acorn-shaped object—in the sky, on the ground, and on the flatbed truck—are either lying or suffering from some kind of mass hallucination. Neither possibility seems plausible.

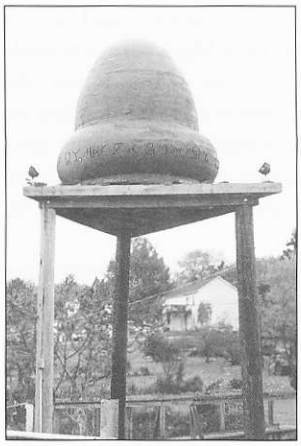
In the 1980s, investigators obtained copies of the Air Force Project Blue Book file on the case. A handwritten memo stated that a "three man team" was sent out from Oakdale, Pennsylvania, "to investigate and pick up an object that started a fire." The files say that members of the 662nd Radar Squadron searched until 2 a.m. and *found nothing*.

Maxwell Air Force Base sent CFi the December 1965 Historical Record of the 662nd Radar Squadron based in Oakdale—the same document released to Stan Gordon years earlier—that provided the relevant names. The squadron had a liaison officer with Project Blue Book, and it was from the Oakdale base, about 50 miles from Kecksburg, that the "three man team" was sent to search for the object. One officer, James Cashman, later called Blue Book headquarters from Oakdale to report that nothing was found, according to the Blue Book files, although he was not one of those sent out on the search.

Our private investigator was able to locate Cashman



Sketch by Charles Hanna of the Kecksburg object seen in a building at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, based on an eyewitness account.



A model of the object that sits behind the Kecksburg Volunteer Fire Department, made for the Unsolved Mysteries TV series in 1990. According to James Romansky, the back, or bumper end (bottom of the acorn), is too wide in proportion to the rest.

and three other key personnel from the 662nd, and Gordon interviewed a fifth in 1991. Only one of these, a lieutenant whom I will not name to respect his privacy, said he actually went out to search for the object that night. This officer said he did not observe any Army presence in the area, any excess civilian activity, or the large spotlights in the woods observed by witnesses and reporter John Murphy. This seems impossible if he was anywhere near the correct location and directly contradicts press reports about the large military presence and civilian crowds. He said he and three other members of the 662nd searched the woods with flashlights and found nothing.

It is revealing that puzzling discrepancies exist among key points of the various accounts, as well as between aspects of the statements of these officers and reports from both the media and Project Blue Book. For example, the lieutenant who searched the woods said there were four in his search team; another officer told us that he had driven with the team to a nearby barrack while two from Oakdale conducted the search with a state trooper. (This could have been the "three man team" referred to by Blue Book, although Blue Book said that the three were all from Oakdale.) Another officer told me there was no search at all, and that the reports coming in to the Oakdale base concerned only an object in the sky and not an object on the ground. He remembers very well the high volume of calls from the local area and speaking to some of the callers, and says that if there had been a search, he definitely would have known. He was adamant that there wasn't one. And yet another told me that the object was a Russian satellite, but insisted that he made that determination only from newspaper and television reports.

According to Project Blue Book records, Cashman called Blue Book headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base twice from the Oakdale base, including a final call at 2 a.m., to report that nothing was found. Oddly, Cashman says he has no memory of any event, phone calls, or heightened activity at that time. He stated that he was the Blue Book liaison officer (as stated in the Blue Book files), as opposed to the lieutenant who told me *he* was the Blue Book officer.

We are not certain whether these contradictory and sometimes confusing reports are simply a question of jumbled memories after all these years, or if other factors are at play. Is it possible that this small group was taken to a different location from the one that was cordoned off by the Army, and that they searched the wrong site? If this did occur, was the state trooper who took the Air Force team to the wrong site instructed by someone to do so? If so, the officers are honestly reporting that nothing was found. Would it therefore have been possible—since Project Blue Book did not have access to cases higher than a secret clearance—that Blue Book actually never knew about an object retrieved from another location by the Army?

On the other hand, Murphy reports seeing what appeared to be members of the 662nd Radar Squadron at the edge of the woods after leaving the police barracks where he had first encountered them. If the lieutenant was one of these men, he could not possibly have missed the surrounding military and civilian activity. Were these officers perhaps sworn not to reveal what happened for national security reasons, and thus their cover stories have differences? We don't know, and we won't know until the government releases the records.

After the Air Force search for the object was completed, the lieutenant who searched prepared a handwritten investigation report as required by Air Force regulations, which was then typewritten by an administrative specialist (the same person who told me he believed the object was a Russian satellite, oddly enough). For reasons unknown, this report, which documented the unsuccessful search for the object, was not included with the Blue Book case files on the Kecksburg incident at the National Archives. "It was an inconclusive report that it could have been a meteorite," the former lieutenant, now 62, told me in a 2003 telephone interview. He provided CFi's attorney with a signed affidavit regarding his writing and filing of this report, and we submitted the affidavit to the Air Force requesting a copy of this crucial document. "Because the investigation was under Project Blue Book, a copy of my report would have eventually been forwarded to the Project Blue Book headquarters, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base," he wrote in the affidavit. So far, no response has been forthcoming to this request.

What was—or wasn't—the object?

"Based on the accounts of the many eyewitnesses whom I have interviewed, I am convinced that an object did fall from the sky and apparently was removed by the military," said Stan Gordon. "Many have asked me what I believe the object was, and my reply still is 'I don't know.' As I have stated in the past, the most likely possibilities are (1) a highly advanced man-made space probe with some controlled-reentry capability, (2) a secret military or government experiment, (3) an extraterrestrial spacecraft."

In looking at item (1) above, many have proposed that the object may have been some kind of Soviet satellite or debris that was secretly hidden away during the cold war.

The leading contender, argued mainly by space consultant James Oberg, has been Cosmos 96, a failed Russian Venera probe that the U.S. Space Command reported reentered the earth's atmosphere over Canada at 3:18 a.m. the same day—far from Kecksburg and more than 13 hours earlier.

In 2003, I conducted a series of decisive interviews exploring this question with Nicholas L. Johnson, chief scientist for orbital debris at the NASA Johnson Space Center, who is recognized internationally as the leading authority on orbital debris and foreign space systems. Among many other works, Johnson authored the book *Handbook of Soviet Lunar and Planetary Exploration* (American Astronautical Society, 1979), in which he wrote about Cosmos 96 and related spacecraft.

At my request, Johnson examined the orbital data for Cosmos 96 and was able to calculate when it would have passed over Pennsylvania if it had continued in orbit that day (which means disregarding the U.S. Space Command information). That time, when it would have traveled from north to south, was approximately 6:20 a.m. "I can tell you categorically that there is no way that any debris from Cosmos 96 could have landed in Pennsylvania anywhere around 4:45 p.m.," Johnson told me. "That's an absolute. Orbital mechanics is very strict." One part of Cosmos 96 could not have stayed in orbit until 4:45 p.m. after the object came apart hours earlier in Canada, as some had speculated.

In an April 2005 email to Towers Productions during its production of a documentary for the History Channel, Johnson summarized his investigation as follows:

> In response to a request by Ms. Kean, I researched the NASA Orbital Debris Program Office data files for tracking data (aka two-line element sets from the U.S. Space Surveillance Network) on Cosmos 96 (U.S. Catalog Number 01742); however, no data for that object were found. I later contacted Air Force Space Command and received historical tracking data for Cosmos 96. Using these data and an Air Force Space Command software package, I was able to reconstruct the possible flight path (groundtrack) of Cosmos 96 on 9 December 1965. I sent to Ms. Kean on 10 October [2003] an email containing two graphics depicting the only possible southbound pass of Cosmos 96 on 9 December 1965, if it had not already reentered the atmosphere. No part of Cosmos 96 could have landed in Pennsylvania in the local afternoon of 9 December 1965.

A drawing of the Soviet space capsule from Cosmos 96, about three feet in diameter, which reentered the atmosphere 13 hours before the Kecksburg incident.

Even more intriguing than the fact that the Kecksburg object could *not* have been any part of Cosmos 96 is that Johnson stated that Cosmos 96 was the only catalogued object to reenter on December 9, and that *no other man-made object from any country came down that day.* He explained that anything not catalogued would have been so small that it would not have survived reentry, and anything larger would have been detected. "I cannot absolutely confirm that it was not some completely unreported event, but the chances of that are virtually nil," Johnson said. "You can't launch something without somebody seeing it. By 1965 the U.S. and Soviets were both reporting their launches."

The possibility of a U.S. reconnaissance satellite dropping a large film canister for recovery on that day has also been ruled out. These capsules were dropped following secret missions over the Soviet Union, and Johnson said that sometimes they fell where they weren't supposed to. The CIA recently declassified data on the reconnaissance flights, and by checking launch and retrieval times, Johnson determined that there was no secret mission that could have led to an inadvertent reentry of a capsule on that day. "This was the only other thing I could think of that could have fallen out of space and was man-made," he said.

Before consulting Johnson, I had spoken with Phillip S. Clark of London's Molniya Space Consultancy by telephone in the U.K. Another renowned expert who studied the Soviet and Chinese space programs for more than 20 years, Clark also eliminated Cosmos 96 as a possibility, based simply on the comparison with the many eyewitness reports providing almost identical descriptions of the object. The Cosmos capsule was only three feet in diameter—much smaller than the object reported by Kecksburg witnesses. Clark also pointed out that the Cosmos capsule could not have made turns or descended slowly at an angle, since it would have been propelled only by the pull of gravity towards earth, and it most likely would have created a crater upon impact. The letters CCCP (Russian for USSR) which appear prominently on the body of Cosmos capsule would have been easily recognized by the witnesses, if the letters had not burned off upon reentry.

In 1965, unlike today, the U.S. government did not have the technical means of detecting natural bodies, such as a meteor, suddenly coming into the earth's atmosphere, so NORAD space surveillance radar could not detect meteors. Therefore, unfortunately, we do not have tracking data that can tell us anything about the 1965 fireball shooting across

(continued on page 28)

As great an enigma as the UFOs themselves

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

We've been in the UFO research business for a long time now, and probably all of us who read *IUR* are convinced that this statement is true: "A large number of witnesses have observed apparently technological devices in the skies that have occasionally landed on the ground and are in no way explainable by mundane natural or current human technology." When I'm asked the naïve, misleading, and rather stupid question, "Do you believe in UFOs?" I say that I won't bother responding to that, but if you want to ask me if I believe in something like the statement above, I say "No, I don't believe that. I *know* it to be true."

I know it to be true because there are so many cases in which the quality and humility of the witnesses, the details observed, the convincing contexts of the sightings, the surprises in the "little things" reported, and the absence of other embellishments when those would be so easy to add, produce a powerful and undeniable set of narratives that are simply and overwhelmingly inexplicable.

Meditating on this while browsing through three terrific resources for the UFO scholar (Loren Gross's series titled *UFOs: A History*; Tom Tulien's oral history project videotapes; and the personal files of James McDonald), the enigma of the title of this article crystallized for me. Why hasn't this problem—that apparently technological objects have graced our skies—been dispensed with long ago? The question of whether there really are UFOs should have been set aside as a no-brainer almost as soon as the phenomenon began flapping in 1947.

For some of those first individuals who seriously tried to study it, it was. For George Garrett in July 1947 in the Pentagon, the disks were real. For Howard "Mac" McCoy at Wright-Patterson AFB in the summer of 1947, the same was true. For those in Project Sign, likewise, and Dewey Fournet, at the Pentagon's UFO intelligence desk—to say nothing of Donald Keyhoe, Coral Lorenzen, Isabel Davis, and on and on. But in 2005 a debate still exists, and we are generally on the losing side as portrayed by media, academia, and the government. Pat answers to this enigma are not very cogent. This isn't a simple cover-up or the Robertson Panel.

Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

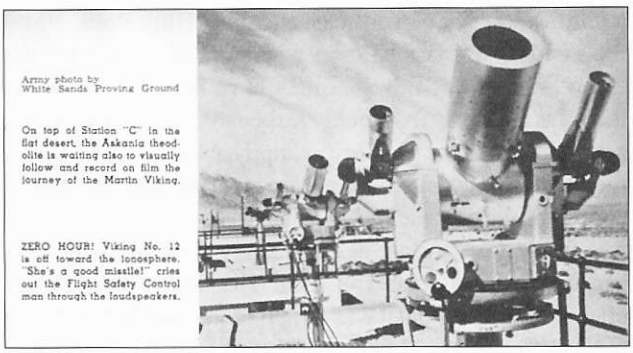
At a Center for UFO Studies board meeting, Jerry Clark said to me that as of the early summer of 1952, this matter should have been settled once and for all. He was, in part, thinking of the Nash-Fortenberry incident. I agreed. In fact, I thought that it should have been settled even earlier. (Note that neither Jerry nor I were adding Roswell into this equation. Why? Speaking for myself, Roswell could well have been managed uniquely; that is, buried in a level of secrecy and cloaked handling where almost no one was privy to any of the details. It was not only secret to the public, but was also closed to the general intelligence community. As such, it would remain in a perpetual gray area, whether you believed in it or not. But regular cases, like Nash-Fortenberry, were completely out of the can, in the open, and could not be rationally denied.)

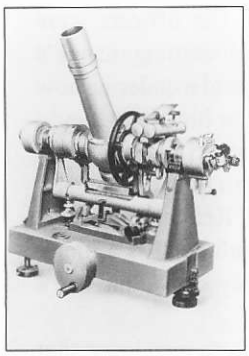
Previous to Nash-Fortenberry, one recalls the General Mills balloon cases of Charles Moore, Commander Robert McLaughlin, J. J. Kaliszewski, among others. Those incidents should have ended the debate as well, given the caliber of the witnesses, back in the late 1940s. And even, on reflection, so should the Kenneth Arnold case and a few others of that time, such as Captain E. J. Smith. These should have ended the matter in July 1947 and, as we've seen with Garrett and McCoy, they did. So why is the matter still debated, and the question not answered, in 2005?

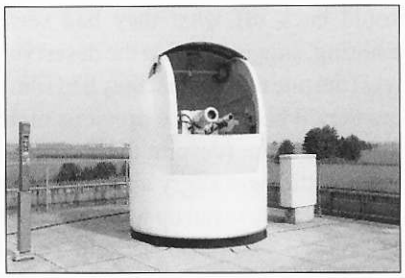
The Edwards Air Force Base film

What inspired this hair-puller was the May 3, 1957, Edwards AFB case, first noticed by Max Miller in his *Saucers* magazine, then pursued, as usual, by James McDonald and then immortalized in print and video by Loren Gross and Tom Tulien. Perhaps *IUR* readers are familiar with the case, but I'll bet many of you are not. It is another powerhouse case, another debate-ender, in my view. Here's how it went:

On the morning of May 3, 1957, the supervisor of civilian camera operators at Edwards AFB in California's Mojave Desert, Frank E. Baker, sent the standard two-man crews out to their Askania tracking telescopes for their 8–5 shifts. A normal day for the teams would be photographing airplanes on speed runs to accurately measure their velocities, or to film a dummy bomb drop, or perhaps even the U-2 high-altitude spyplane. Previously the telescopes were


Army photo by White Sands Proving Ground
On top of Station "C" in the flat desert, the Askania theodolite is waiting also to visually follow and record on film the journey of the Martin Viking.
ZERO HOUR! Viking No. 12 is off toward the ionosphere. "She's a good missile!" cries out the Flight Safety Control man through the loudspeakers.





Various types of Askania tracking telescopes in use by the U.S. military.

calibrated by focusing on stars, and sometimes even by balloons deliberately launched for this purpose. The operators were familiar with all types of aerial technologies.

The master station for the telescope crews was 1½ miles outside the main area of Edwards, and the five telescope installations a little further into the surrounding desert. The crews drove out to their positions. Veterans James Bittick and Jack Gettys were in their pickup expecting a normal day. As they approached their station, they saw an object in the sky, shining brightly. It was, initially, at about 45° elevation and seemed to be hovering. Gettys, who was very interested in UFOs, immediately stated that they had a UFO on their hands.

The crew had to get permission from Baker before trying to photograph the object. So they called in, began readying the scope, loaded the film (as they would have done regardless to begin the day), and waited for the OK.

This interlude lasted for a few minutes while they worked at the scope and snuck peeks at the hovering object. Gettys, who looked through the side-mounted spotting scope, said that the base of object had a circular appearance when high in the sky. Bittick apparently didn't look at it through the spotting scope until it was lower in the sky, as he remembered only the side view.

The go-ahead from Baker came in time, and they began filming, each viewing the object through the spotting scopes while the film rolled at a rapid pace (probably eight frames per second, as Bittixk recounted to McDonald 10 years later). They shot about 100 feet and stopped. When they started filming, the object began to move away from its estimated distance of one mile. When they quit filming, it was about five miles distant, and its motion had been fast and steady with no wobbling.

What they saw was a disk-shaped object (a "cigar" from the side) with a low dome on top. Gettys felt the edges were more rounded, while Bittick thought them more pointed. The dome had little ports around it, perhaps five or six, and the device was spinning. It was shiny metallic in appearance, but whether it was gold in color or silver with the golden morning sunlight glinting off it was not obvious. Gettys thought it was definitely gold-colored. Guessing at its size, he thought it was "parking lot sized," about 100 feet in diameter. At no time did the men hear any engine sound from the UFO.

Gettys's memory of the UFO (10 years later)

Bittick's memory of the UFO (40+ years later)

Baker's memory of the UFO (10 years later), with hazy edges

AIR FORCE STUDIES PHOTOS

Cameras Track Flying Object Over Desert

Camera studies of an unidentified flying object photographed at Edwards Air Force Base last Friday are being analyzed by the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, O., The Times learned yesterday.

Spokesmen at the secret desert test center north of Los Angeles would say only that the object was spotted by two civilian photo theodolite operators.

They tracked the object and took pictures with the specialized camera equipment. Films and information were dispatched immediately to the intelligence center.

Unofficial reports said the object appeared round, that it caught the morning sun and that it moved but not at any great speed. There were no estimates as to its size or altitude.

Edwards officers would not hazard a guess as to what the object was, although one said it could have been a weather balloon.

"This desert air does crazy things," he added.

AF Studying Saucer Photo?

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif., May 10 (INS).—Officers at Edwards Air Force Base today were studying films made of a purported "unidentified flying object" seen over the base. on 5/3

The object was photographed by two civilian technicians who used special equipment to track and record it.

Unofficial sources said the object appeared circular and glinted brightly in the morning sun when observed last Friday. However, intelligence officers at Edwards base, a hush-hush air force test center, would say almost nothing of the incident.

Left, Los Angeles Times, May 9, 1957; right, New York Journal-American, May 10, 1957.

Gettys's account differs from Bittick's in only a few details. First, he said he could see the underside of the object, which was circular (planiform) when at it highest elevation angle. Also, he didn't see any ports on the dome.

They contacted the base and ultimately two jets were scrambled. By the time these came overhead, the UFO had disappeared in an easterly direction. The jets never caught up to it or even saw it.

After Gettys and Bittick turned in the film, it apparently stayed at Edwards to be developed, the normal procedure. Following the incident, possibly even the next work day, three officers showed up at Frank Baker's station: a major, a captain, and a lieutenant. Bittick and Gettys were interrogated separately, but their stories matched and neither

would back off what they had seen. The officers were insulting, suggesting that the desert sun does things to one's eyes (despite the fact that they had film), and wondering how late they'd been out the previous night or how long they'd been in the sun (despite the incident occurring at about 8 a.m.). Bittick got angry enough to turn to Frank Baker and ask: "Do I have to put up with this crap?" Reflecting back on this 49-odd years later, he told Tom Tulien, "It's a funny thing how they try to cover up what they know, and use a stupid answer for it."

The stupid answer was a balloon. Both men knew that it wasn't a balloon. Not only did they have the evidence of their eyes checked against the years of experience with the tracking telescope, but also there was the film itself. A friend of theirs who worked at Edwards knew the fellow who developed the Askania films. He got the guy to clip off a strip that he ultimately gave to Bittick (who kept it for several years then burned it because he shouldn't have had it in the first place). Other clips from the film apparently got to Baker as well. The film showed a cigar shape with a bump on top. (A few prints from the film are in the Blue Book files, but they seem to be more distant examples and are little more than light blobs. See them in Brad Steiger's 1976 paperback, *Project Blue Book*.) Baker later said that he saw closer photos that definitely showed what Bittick and Gettys claimed.

And, what about the balloon? Well, there *was* a balloon released from Edwards at about 7:40 a.m. on May 3. It was very well tracked. Lt. Col. Raymond Klein, the deputy chief of staff for operations at Edwards, compared it to what the observers saw and where they were located, and wrote: "Based on the above track made and the location of the observers at the time of the sighting [all known quantities], the weather balloon released at Edwards could not have been the unidentified object reported."

Jim McDonald rechecked the data and confirmed Klein's analysis. Nevertheless, Project Blue Book wrote the incident off as a balloon with total disregard for the facts. Someone at Edwards may have been UFO-sympathetic, as the story was quickly leaked to California newspapers. The Air Force was very unhappy about this. The horse, thereby, was let out of the barn enough that we didn't entirely lose this case.

Well, there we are again: Expert, multiple witnesses and hundreds of frames of film. The deputy of staff for operations knows that it was not a balloon, and is thereby an unidentified physical object in the air near the base—just like Kaliszewski, Moore, and McLaughlin knew the same after their sightings. But, somehow, USAF intelligence refuses to know. And it can't be just Project Blue Book and an understaffed and not-a-little-incompetent project officer there. This information is passing through other offices as well, including Air Defense Command, the Air Force offices at the Pentagon, very probably the Office of Naval Research, and/or the Office of Naval Intelligence, and our friends in the CIA. And people inside these organizations are hearing about these expert-witness cases, here and there, in at least a constant trickle, if not a flow. Doesn't anyone have any memory? Doesn't an accumulation of anomalies build up in anyone's mind? Why doesn't this stuff stick anywhere? Of course, it sticks with us, but we obviously don't count.

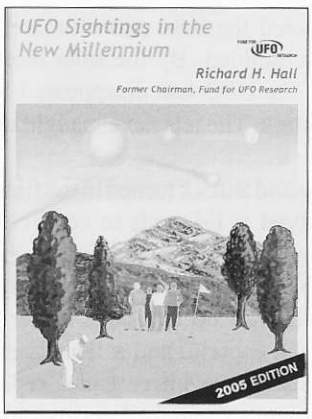
AN EXPLANATION, PLEASE?

The explanation for this rather astounding selective amnesia is something that I'd very much like someone to clearly elucidate for me. What is it about an organization like USAF Intelligence, or the Pentagon, or the CIA, or a fuzzy concept like "the media" that allows something of this potential importance and clear evidence to be constantly fuzzed out of existence, despite incidents that just *can't* be so discarded? A colossal example: How can the General Mills balloon cases of the late 1940s and early 1950s not even be presented at the CIA's Robertson Panel in January 1953? My eyeballs start revolving independently in my skull if I think too long about that! If the most undeniable expert witness, multiple witness, device-recorded incidents are not even resident enough in the consciousnesses of Ruppelt, Fournet, or Hynek to bother to sell them to Robertson, what explains that?

I've bored my colleagues at CUFOS for several years with the statement that ufology is not a field of study because it never establishes anything. It has no real history, no foundation of "givens." This is despite Nash-Fortenberry, Father Gill, Lawrence Coyne, and the General Mills and Edwards AFB boys. But why aren't these "givens"? They are, for any intellectually honest student of the phenomenon, certainly "undeniables." But they don't stick together and they don't allow ufology to "stick" in the consciousness of the government, military, and academy. Please educate me on this, dear readers. ✦

UFO SIGHTINGS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

This revised edition of Richard Hall's monograph on 21st-century UFO sightings is now available from CUFOS. This is a report for those who like to read about sightings, showing that UFOs are still around and doing amazing things. Witnesses are seeing all the classic types of UFOs reported over the years, and there is a special section on large triangular objects. Send a check for $12.00 ($15.00 if you reside outside the U.S.) to CUFOS, 2457 W. Peterson, Chicago, IL 60659.



VENUSIAN DREAMS

BY JEROME CLARK

Only slightly smaller than the earth and once called its sister world, Venus is the second planet from the sun. Often likened to hell, it is no place you would want to live or even visit. Its dense atmosphere, shrouding the entire planet under a cloud cover and consisting of 96% carbon dioxide and a minute amount of water vapor, traps surface heat in a fierce greenhouse effect. The average temperature is a tropical 840° F. —blistering enough to melt lead. The atmosphere also produces surface pressure 90 times what we experience on earth, unless we happen to be standing on the ocean floor at a depth of 3000 feet. It rains droplets of sulfuric acid. The presence of sulfur-dioxide concentrations may imply ongoing volcanic activity.

This scientific description of the Morning Star and the Evening Star, as earthlings have called this bright and beautiful presence (which the ancients thought were two separate celestial bodies) in our heavens, would not have been possible if not for space probes and technical advances in astronomy in the mid- to latter 20th century. Before that, it was possible to imagine just about anything about Venus, including the beings and creatures that lived on it, and human beings did precisely that.

THE DREAMS OF THE SCIENTISTS

Among the most notable of the early speculators was the philosopher Immanuel Kant (right) (1724–1804). In *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755) he outlined the astronomically and logically dubious hypothesis that distance from the sun determines the intelligence level of a world's inhabitants; thus, the people who live on Mercury are the stupidest, and Venusians are only dimly brighter. Kant and his contemporaries knew nothing of Uranus and Neptune, not discovered until the following century, or Pluto, not until 1930, so in the Kantian cosmic scheme of things, the smartness of the people of Jupiter (fifth in the solar system) was exceeded only by that of Saturn (the sixth and, to mid-18th-century knowledge, the last).

On the other hand, to Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), author of a widely read 1686 book on life on other worlds, Venusians are "little black people, scorch'd with the Sun, witty, full of Fire, very Amorous." In the generally comparable imagining of Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737–1814), Venusians live in a paradisal, pastoral realm. The mountain people are shepherds, while "the others, on the shores of their fertile islands, give themselves over to dancing, to feasts, divert themselves with songs, or compete for prizes in swimming, like the happy islanders of Tahiti."

An observer in 1743 reported seeing "ashen light"—mysterious illumination—on Venus' dark side. Since then other astronomers have described the phenomenon, still not conclusively explained though generally thought to be the consequence of electricity in the atmosphere. To German astronomer Franz von Paula Gruithuisen (right) (1774–1852), however, the phenomenon could be explained as light given off by "general festivals of fire" in which the Venusians periodically participate, corresponding with "changes in government" or perhaps to religious celebrations. This and other luminous anomalies led French inventor Charles Cros (1842–1888) to wonder if Venusians were trying to signal the earth and to propose ways of sending signals back.

Using earthly population-density figures as a guide, Scottish clergyman and amateur scientist Thomas Dick (1774–1857) startlingly pegged the Venusian population at a densely packed 53,500,000,000. Popular science journalist Richard Proctor (1837–1888) wrote in *Other Worlds Than Ours* (1870), "On the whole, the evidence we have points very strongly to Venus as the abode of living creatures not unlike the inhabitants of earth."

Because the clouds covering the planet rendered telescopic observation of its surface impossible, much about Venus remained unknown even in the first half of the 20th

Jerome Clark, co-editor of IUR, *is author of the multivolume* UFO Encyclopedia *(1990–1998) and other works. His latest book,* Unnatural Phenomena, *published by ABC-CLIO in 2005, examines the Fortean landscape of 19th- and early 20th-century America.*

century. Thus, the sorts of speculation in which even mainstream astronomers sometimes engaged look outlandish in retrospect, more science fiction than science.

For example, in common with his French colleague Edmond Perrier (1844–1921) and others, Harvard University astronomer William H. Pickering (1858–1938)—incidentally an ally of Percival Lowell in the Mars canal controversy—argued that Venus is a tropical planet teeming with water and humid swamps, harboring giant reptiles of the sort that roamed the earth during the age of dinosaurs. "As to the question of intelligent life," he added in a 1911 interview with a *Boston Post* reporter, "the question is still open." Around the same time another then-prominent astronomer, Thomas Jefferson Jackson See (1866–1962), of the U.S. Naval Observatory at Mare Island, California, declared the issue of intelligent Venusian life a settled one, based on his years of observation.

Beginning in the 1920s, a handful of astronomical investigators were collecting more realistic data that suggested, first, fierce surface temperatures and then (in 1932) the absence of oxygen and water vapor, plus an abundance of carbon dioxide in Venus' atmosphere. This sparked an inevitable skepticism about life, even vegetable life, among scientists who were paying attention.

Others, however, acted as if oblivious to the new developments, treating the planet as it had always been depicted: as a warmer earth. In 1922 Salt Lake City meteorologist Alfred Rordame, speaking before the American Meteorological Society, argued that spectroscopic findings which appeared to show no oxygen or water vapor could not be trusted; in reality, he contended, the "spectroscope is incapable of penetration below these clouds around Venus, as the light is reflected from the upper surface of them. The bulk of whatever oxygen and water vapor exists must be beneath this veil in the stormy atmosphere nearer the planet." That same year Charles G. Abbot (1872–1973) of the Smithsonian Institution remarked that Venus is the only nonearthly planet likely to harbor intelligent life because it has, he claimed, both "water vapor and water clouds." As late as 1946, Abbot fantasized about radio communication with Venusians "brought up completely separate [from earthlings], having their own systems of government, social usages, religions, and surrounded by vegetation and animals entirely related to any here on earth."

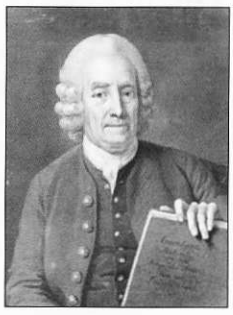
In his best-selling *Astronomy* (1935) astronomer/clergyman (and, in subsequent decades, creationist hero) Arthur M. Harding (1884–1947) wrote, "No one would imagine for an instant that after the Creator had constructed this magnificent solar system . . . He would have neglected our little globe to be the abode of life and overlooked its twin sister and neighbor, Venus. Surely there must be some forms of life on Venus that are not so very different from what we find on the earth. The objection has been raised that Venus is too near the sun to have life on it. It is true that Venus is a little warmer than the earth, but this is no barrier. We have life at the tropics and also life at the poles."

Still, no one had glimpsed Venus' surface, so those inclined to do so continued to imagine everything from a massive dust bowl to lush vegetation to a planet-encircling ocean. Writing in *The Universe We Live In* (1951), John Robinson revived the venerable vision of Venus—most prominently put forth more than three decades earlier by Swedish chemist and Nobel laureate Svante Arrhenius (1859–1927)—as a place like "the far-off Carboniferous Period of the earth's geological history" with "seas and swamps and the steamy, heavily carbonated atmosphere. . . . Venus has every appearance of being a world something like our world hundreds of millions of years ago."

Donald H. Menzel (1901–1976), of the Harvard Observatory, had a reputation as a fierce debunker of UFO reports, but he was also a wildly imaginative theorist about Venus, in one instance in the same book (*Flying Saucers*, 1953). He envisioned "warm seas" in which life forms of all kind, from the microscopic to large invertebrates and vertebrates, flourish. "It is somewhat interesting to note that, had we ourselves developed on Venus instead of on the earth," he reflected, "it is not at all unlikely that we might have developed into a race of mermaids and mermen." On the other hand, in the same decade Soviet astronomer Gavriil A. Tikhov (1875–1960) pictured Venus as a world of glimmering, ray-emitting flowers. In a December 1959 presentation to the year-old National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the California Institute of Technology's Harrison Brown (1917–1986) spoke of a Venus of mostly seas, harboring jellyfish-like creatures.

From February 1961 and through the next two decades, the United States and the Soviet Union launched a series of space probes. Some sailed near the planet, others entered its atmosphere, and a few successfully landed on its surface. The discoveries ended all talk that intelligent Venusians, or even life forms larger than microbes, populate that world.

The occultists' Venus



In his 50th year the Swedish scientist Emanuel Swedenborg (right) (1688–1772), the author already (in the words of one biographer) of "160 works and [founder of] six new sciences," began experiencing mystical visions which occupied him the rest of his life. Among other spiritual adventures he traveled to the moon and all the planets known in the eighteenth century. All of these bodies, he reported in *Earths in Our Solar System* (1758), are populated by intelligent beings, sometimes by more than one kind.

Venusians, he wrote, "are of two kinds; some are gentle and benevolent, others wild, cruel and of gigantic stature. The latter rob and plunder, and live by this means; the former have so great a degree of greatness and kindness that they are always beloved by the good; thus they often see the

Lord appear in their own form on their earth." The bad guys not only robbed their victims but ate them.

Another influential mystic who spoke with certainty of Venusians was Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (right) (1831–1891), founder of Theosophy. Blavatsky, with Swedenborg one of the most important figures in the history of Western occultism, proposed an enormously complex cosmic order and alternative history, including "Lords of the Flame" on Venus. Blavatsky had not much to say about them, perhaps because she had so much else to invent.

It was Martians, not Venusians, whom people of the 19th century were more likely to claim they had met or heard from. Martians either communicated through mediums or, as dubious late-century newspaper accounts alleged, flew, sometimes landing, airships (see my "Conversations with Martians," *IUR* 29, no. 3, pp. 19–23). For the most part, Venusians existed only as abstract possibilities, not as entities one might encounter.

In the 20th century, Guy Warren Ballard (right) (1878–1939) set a dubious precedent for a later generation of claimants to extraterrestrial contact (by the early 1950s being called "contactees"). Ballard was a man with a checkered past and little claim to personal accomplishment until in the last decade of his life he came forth with bizarre and escalating claims about his interactions with Ascended Masters, commencing with a 1930 visit to California's Mount Shasta (whose interior, mystical legend has it, harbors survivors of the lost Pacific continent Lemuria).

As he told the story in *Unveiled Mysteries* (pseudonymously bylined "Godfré Ray King," 1934), Ballard—well versed in Theosophical and other occult writings—had decided to take a day off from his job as a mining engineer to investigate the alleged presence of a supernatural group of deities called the Brotherhood of Mount Shasta. He was taking a drink at a mountain stream when a young-looking stranger approached to pour a creamy liquid into Ballard's cup. Ballard drank it without question. The substance had an "electrical vivifying effect in my mind and body," he would report.

Soon the mysterious figure introduced himself as Saint Germain, an Ascended Master, and proved it by supernatural demonstrations. Ballard had been chosen, he said, to be the Messenger of the Masters. With his wife Edna (1886–1971) he went on to form the I AM Religious Activity ("AM" standing for Ascended Master), an intensely controversial group, formed in Chicago and later moved to Los Angeles, the Ballards's home base, in 1932. ("I AM" also is an allusion to *Exodus* 3:14, where God says to Moses, "I am who I am." In the Ballards's Theosophy-based theology —Saint Germain is borrowed from Blavatsky—Ascended Masters are former humans who used the divine energy of God's light that exists in each of us to ascend to God's level.) The group, albeit diminished, survives to the present, even after Edna's death in 1971 and son Donald's retirement from the movement in 1957. Guy Ballard died on December 29, 1939.

In the 1930s the Ballards roamed the nation with what amounted to a mediumistic road show, producing extravagant pageants, thrilling followers with communications from Saint Germain and others, and enraging others who saw them, with some justice, as charlatans and fascists. The Ballards had both been enthusiasts of American Nazi William Dudley Pelley (right) (1890–1965). In the wake of an out-of-body encounter with Ascended Masters which he detailed in a widely read 1929 magazine article, Pelley had assembled a paramilitary army of pro-Hitler, anti-Semitic lowlifes known as Silver Shirts because they wore, well, silver shirts in their faux-German uniforms. When the Ballards broke with Pelley to form their own organization, they borrowed many of Pelley's political precepts and ambitions but—whatever their other intellectual, philosophical, and moral failings—did not traffic in anti-Semitism.

Among the otherworldly entities Guy Ballard interacted with were Venusians. He first met them in Saint Germain's company when the two attended (in out-of-body states) a convention of Masters in their gold-laden retreat beneath the Grand Tetons in Wyoming. Twelve of them—men and women—showed up for the confab, appearing suddenly in a blaze of light. They were beautiful, golden-haired, and violet-blue-eyed, all in all looking very much like the Venusians who would become standard issue in tales of the saucer-contactee era. They entertained the assembled mystical masters with a violin and harp concert. Perhaps not coincidentally, in consensus reality Edna Ballard was a harpist.

Venusians were enlisted into the Ballards's unending crusade against the sinister forces, including press critics and disenchanted former I AM followers (one of whom remarked dryly that the couple had a "well-defined persecution complex"), who sought to frustrate Guy and Edna's struggle to bring humans to divine light and ascension. A regular communicant in their mediumistic demonstrations was the "Tall Master from Venus," a Lord of the Flame. To rapturous crowds the Tall Master, speaking through Guy, praised Guy and Edna as "the most precious Beings on the face of this earth today." Another Venusian, Sanat Kumara, grumpily scolded the faithful, "The greatest mistake of mankind today is to think that they must have physical contact in order to express love." The Ballards and their otherworldly associates forbade all forms of sexual expression, even hand-holding and kissing.

Many prophets, even ones who claim experiences of a fantastic and outlandish nature, are sincere visionaries, and

some aren't. More than a few observers think that the Ballards consciously and deliberately concocted an elaborate hornswaggle, its particulars cobbled together from Blavatsky and other sources. A particularly prominent influence is the occult novel *A Dweller on Two Planets*, by "Phylos the Tibetan" (right, the supposed channeler of the contents to automatic writer Frederick Spencer Oliver [1866–1899], composed in the mid-1880s but unpublished until 1905). It is certainly the model—Ballard barely changes the language—for many of Ballard's adventures with the Masters. (Oliver's hero Walter Pierson is taken to Venus whose inhabitants have, it turns out, "splendid physiques . . . graceful and perfect [in] every line.")

A second, Will L. Garver's 1894 mystical novel *The Brother of the Third Degree*, features as a leading character the Comte de St. Germain. The Comte de St. Germain was an actual historical figure, an 18th-century dabbler in the mystic arts and a notorious charlatan who hinted that he was immortal in the most literal sense. Voltaire famously sneered that the attention-obsessed count was "the man who never dies."

In the March/April 1961 issue of England's *Flying Saucer Review*, W. R. Drake deduced exactly who St. Germain really was:

> Viewed in our flying saucer context, the appearances and disappearance across the centuries of this fantastic man with phenomenal talents and inexhaustible wealth, without origin or social background, which so baffled his contemporaries, become suddenly illumined in one startling wondrous revelation. Is it not plausible to suggest that Count St. Germain was a missionary from Space, an avatar from Venus with remarkable powers, who throughout the ages has selflessly descended to Earth to direct Man's evolution, and who periodically returns to direct Man's evolution, and who periodically returns to Venus in spaceships to recuperate? His extraordinary longevity may be normal for that lovely planet, the source of his diamonds; his spiritual ideals and nobility of life, acknowledged by all witnesses, testifying to a civilization there far transcending our own.

Venusians and Flying Saucers

In a little-noticed story published in a Washington newspaper, *Centralia Daily Chronicle*, on April 1, 1950, an elderly man related his recent meeting just days before with the crew of a Venusian spacecraft. It was not an April Fool's Day joke. Kenneth Arnold (whose June 24, 1947, sighting over Mount Rainier brought flying saucers into public consciousness) and his wife Doris interviewed the claimant, an elderly retired railroad worker named Samuel Eaton Thompson, soon afterwards and taped his account.

Thompson, a poorly educated, unsophisticated man, was returning from a visit to relatives when he pulled over to take a break in a wooded area between Morton and Mineral, Washington. As he walked into the trees, he came upon a clearing in which a large globe-shaped structure hovered just above the ground. He noticed several strikingly beautiful children playing on steps which led from a door on the side of the craft. They had a deeply tanned appearance, with long blond hair which came all the way to their waists. They were naked. Soon similar-appearing adults came to the door and watched him, apparently uneasy about his intentions. Thompson managed to persuade them that he meant no harm.

He ended up, he said, spending some 40 hours (including one overnight) in their company over the next two days, interrupted only by a quick trip home for a camera (which recorded nothing except a bright glow as if from overexposure). The Venusians were innocents who seemed to have stepped out of an interplanetary Garden of Eden, without sin, shame, or even technological knowledge; all they knew about their ship was its four buttons took one up or down or to earth from Venus or the reverse. The Venusians had come to spread peace and good will, though they had not received it from earthlings, whose aircraft had shot at their ship. All planets of the solar system are inhabited, the Venusians told him, but only Martians are more warlike than the people of our world. Thompson's companions consumed only nuts, vegetables, and fruits, and their exemplary dietary habits kept them from ever suffering illness; they died only of old age. They lived not by intellect but by instinct, yet "they're really smarter than we think they are. They've got a gift that is so much greater than ours that there is no comparison." According to them, Jesus Christ will return in A.D. 10,000.

The Arnolds did not believe Thompson had a literal physical encounter. Kenneth Arnold, who considered much of the story absurd to the point of comedy, thought it was something like a vivid dream or hallucination. They did not doubt, however, that Thompson believed every word he was saying. Anyone who hears the tape-recorded interview is likely to agree. It is hard to overstate Thompson's naivete, evinced, for example, in his struggle to describe concepts (vegetarianism, reincarnation, and sun signs) for which he lacked a vocabulary.

After the newspaper article and the Arnolds's interview (the contents of which were not released until three decades later), Thompson disappeared from history, his vision—arguably literal as much as metaphorical—of Venusian visitors casting no shadow on the saucer tall tales that would surface in the next few years. Unlike Thompson's, the Venusians of the contactee movement would be technologically sophisticated and scientifically advanced.

No evidence indicates that George Adamski (right) (1891–1965) ever heard of Thompson, but as a longtime figure

on the California occult scene he knew of Blavatsky and was conversant in Theosophy, and he may or may not have known the Ballards personally. What is certain is that the golden-haired, peace-loving, long-winded Venusians he claimed to know personally had been heard of before, but this time there was the additional element of flying saucers, heretofore unmentioned even in mystical literature dealing specifically with interplanetary intelligences. The UFO controversy that erupted in the summer of 1947 and continues uninterrupted to the present changed forever the landscape of alternative realities; from then on, no talk of people from other worlds could fail to mention the nuts-and-bolts vehicles in which they arrived.

Adamski came to modest public visibility in the 1930s as a kind of low-rent guru, founder of the Royal Order of Tibet and the teacher of a doctrine he called "Universal Progressive Christianity." Known to his followers as "professor," he set up a tiny observatory, with a 15-inch telescope, on the southern slope of Mount Palomar, causing him to be mistaken—or perhaps that was the intention—as a professional astronomer from the Palomar Observatory a few miles away. His emergence on the international scene awaited the saucer craze, however. By 1949 he was adding juicy items about official cover-ups of UFO flights from "the other side of the moon" and about secret government knowledge that all planets are inhabited. That same year he published a didactic novel, *Pioneers of Space*, which previewed interplanetary tales sometimes much like those he would soon peddle as actual events.

In 1950 and 1951, in *Fate*, a digest popular among enthusiasts of the paranormal, Adamski published pictures of alleged spaceships. The photographs stirred considerable interest, but nothing compared to what would happen in late 1952—November 20, specifically—when Adamski, accompanied by six "witnesses," watched a saucer land in the California desert near Desert Center; alone, he went on to speak with its occupant, the Venusian Orthon (right). Orthon's essential message was that earthlings' warring ways were generating concern throughout the solar system.

That was only the start. There were other photographs, other contacts with Venusians, Martians, and Saturnians, a trip into space and around the moon, and finally (and unacceptably to his followers) voyages to Venus and then Saturn. He reported most of this in three books, in pamphlets, in private conversations, on lecture platforms around the world. To some he was "earth's cosmic ambassador," and to others he was a shameless con man. He did not get rich, but he did get famous in a way. Soon enough a small army of contactees joined him in friendship and solidarity with Venusians.

Initially, Adamski had to be contented with pictures of the Venusian surface. In his remarkably tedious *Inside the Space Ships* (1955) he recounts his travels in "Scouts" from Venus and Saturn and conversations—whole pages of droning (all of it inexplicably transcribed verbatim) by assorted spacemen. In the last chapter he boards a Venusian craft one August day in 1954 to meet with, among others, Orthon, who—using laserlike images—shows him scenes from Venus. "I saw magnificent mountains . . . some not very different from those of Earth," Adamski wrote. "Some were thickly timbered and I saw water running in streams and cascades down the mountainsides." Orthon noted that Venus has a system of canals which link the planet's seven oceans and many lakes. (In the science-fictional *Pioneers of Space* the "Venetians" tell the narrator that they have "nine oceans, many lakes and rivers, majestic, towering mountains.") Adamski also saw cities consisting of dome-shaped buildings and houses "radiating in prismatic colors that gave the impression of a revitalizing force. . . . The people I saw on the streets of these cities seemed to be going about their business in much the same manner as Earth folk, except for the absence of rush and worry so noticeable with us." Cylinder-shaped cars glided just above the ground. (*Pioneers*: "Venetian" cars "seem to be gliding right over the surface of the ground.")

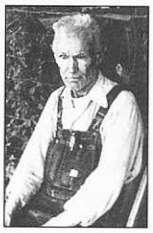
He also observed an ocean and a beach, animals and flowers. The clouds surrounding the planet, Orthon explained, are a "filter system" counteracting "the destructive rays which otherwise would enter its atmosphere." That is why the average Venusian lives a thousand earth years.

In his last four years Adamski's claims grew even more outlandish, if that is imaginable, so extreme that even those who had swallowed in their entirety all the previous yarns started to suspect that he was now making up stories. Either that, or the CIA was setting him up. Or maybe it was evil space people; after all, Adamski *had* acknowledged that lately a "new set of boys" had come onto the scene, replacing the beloved and always trustworthy Orthon and associates. In 1961, in any event, Adamski reported that he finally got to make the trip to Venus. After a 12-hour flight the ship landed on the surface. Its earthly passenger wandered about for five hours before boarding the Venus-California express for the return trip.

Naturally, this was all exhausting. Adamski felt fatigued after a short walk, but that was not just because of his tiring travel schedule. It also had something to do with the atmospheric pressure, which was comparable to what one might encounter "at the altitude and in a comparable location with Mexico City." He noted that "80% of the planet is covered with water. The cloud cover that does not permit us to see the surface of Venus is caused by constant evaporation of moisture. This permits a large tropical area where fruits and vegetables are plentiful."

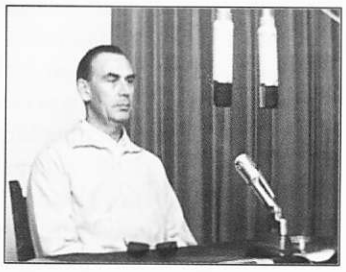
Though many contactees have told tales of adventures with Venusians, only a relatively small number have claimed actual visits to Venus. None have had much, if anything, of interest to say about it, though one anonymous American wrote to the *Australian Saucer Record* in 1961 to state that

his space friends denied Adamski's contacts; Venusians do not exist, they said, and to prove it they flew the writer to Venus, where he saw a swampy planet with oceans and jungles. "The reason there is no human life on Venus is that a human being could only live for a few days on that planet," he said. "Everything grows very fast and dies fast."



Another Venusian traveler, who reported the more typical paradisal, inhabited world, was 1950s contact claimant Buck Nelson (right). An Ozark farmer, Nelson attracted even more ridicule than most with his stories—always related in a kind of backwoods English—which fused a naïve homoeroticism (beautiful Venusian men who shed their clothing for reasons that never manage to make sense) with racist notions (a Venus segregated by skin color) and laughable swindles (the marketing of packets of Venusian dog hair).

The more obscure John Langdon Watts interacted with Venusians, who, he learned, live to 2,500 of our years because, like Thompson's friends, they eat good vegetarian food. They are here, he wrote in the 1970s, to prepare us for a planet-wide cataclysm that will occasion massive damage in the seminal year 2000. He took up residence for a time on Venus, living in a domed city with a female resident, Mara. From his earthly home in Florida, he published books detailing cosmetic and diet tips he had picked up from the lovely Mara.



The Englishman George King (right) zipped to Venus in his astral body, arriving in the Valley of the Sun at the Temple of Solace. A guide named Patana took him to another temple, from which spiritual vibrations were beamed into the brain of every Venusian. For his part King experienced "a supreme, pulsating, scintillating, living brilliance which knew me more completely than I had ever known myself." King subsequently moved to Los Angeles, where he continued to channel assorted space communications. His Aetherius Society—named after his principal contact, a Venusian—is one of the most successful and long-lasting of the contactee sects. King himself died in 1997.

Another astral visitor, Allen Noonan (whom a cosmic voice had asked to be "Savior of the World"; he assented), noticed architectural marvels which somehow escaped the attention of other pilgrims to earth's sister planet. "There is a city on Venus that would be called the New Jerusalem if it were here," he told journalist Lloyd Mallan. "The cities of our own planet are obsolete. On Venus there is most striking city. The City of Spirals. It has no streets. Everything is built of beautiful spirals. The people and the traffic move around on elegant spirals."

A NIGHTMARE OF VENUSIANS

The contactees' Venusians have been a tediously virtuous lot, with very, very rare exception. The unsettling stories told by a Swedish man known only as Helge, whose apparent sincerity in the face of his highly improbable testimony puzzled some observers, including investigator Håkan Blomqvist, are perhaps the sole exception. Helge's alleged adventures are hard to read as either literal truth or deliberate fiction, but whatever their ultimate ontological nature, they are undeniably more interesting—quite a lot more interesting—than the competition in the ET-contact section. Like Thompson's tale, it leads one to reflect that things are neither true nor false. The story is long and complex, and what follows necessarily skips over a great deal of detail to get to the core.

Born in 1913, Helge (not his real name), a rock blaster by profession, lived with his wife Anna in Uddevalla, near Göteborg. He is said to have been an atheist and an open scoffer at UFO reports, though he did believe he possessed a talent for telepathy. In the late autumn of 1965 kidney stones were causing him discomfort, and he was to undergo an operation on December 10. On impulse he abruptly left the house with his dog and took a walk along a nearby frozen lake.

Something disturbed the dog, which began running in circles and acting up. Helge put the animal on a leash, and then he heard a whirring sound above him. Looking up, he spotted a disc-shaped object with a translucent surface through which he could glimpse moving figures. The UFO descended until it was a few feet above the ice. A tube came out of the bottom, and through it four humanlike entities floated as if on an invisible elevator. Once outside, they approached him. They were one older man, two younger men, and a woman, all covered in a transparent overall which revealed their nude, unblemished bodies. Entirely hairless, they had big dark, slightly slanted eyes and perfect teeth. Their ears were pointed, the openings inside so big that Helge thought he could see inside their heads. On their wrists each wore a broad dark bracelet with a yellow button on it. The men were thick-necked and built like wrestlers.

Over the next hour the beings communicated with Helge via drawings in the snow. They were curious about such earthly activities as hunting and dancing, and at one point the oldest of the group retrieved a cylinder-shaped device from the ship, gliding it along Helge's back. Helge felt a warm sensation, then a cessation of the pain from his kidney stones. The four then returned to their craft, which took off at a dizzying rate of speed.

The next day, when Helge was X-rayed prior to his operation, medical personnel were puzzled to discover that his physical problem had been cured. Not long afterwards a Stockholm ufologist interviewed him about his encounter.

In August 1966 Helge had a second contact. Again drawn outside by some mysterious instinct, he again observed the UFO hovering above the lake. This time, how-

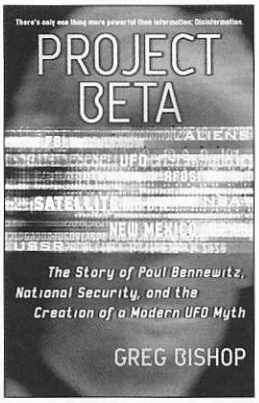
(continued on page 26)

DOTY AND THE BODY SNATCHERS

BY ROBERT DURANT

Greg Bishop, *Project Beta: The Story of Paul Bennewitz, National Security, and the Creation of a Modern UFO Myth*. New York: Paraview, 2005.

The late Peter Jennings sneeringly dismissed Roswell as a "myth" on his two-hour ABC network UFO show in February 2005. How often have we ufologists impotently squirmed as the mainstream brushes us off as purveyors of myth and fairytales?



Let me adopt the mainstream mindset for a moment. I will tell you a myth, a fairytale.

Once upon a time, an alien was held captive by the U.S. government for many years at a secret location in the Southwest. The ET was telepathic, transferred technology to us, and managed to salvage from his crashed saucer a device that showed the past and future history of this and other planets. Regardless of the viewer's native language, the information was conveyed in that language. That is, a Russian heard Russian, and an American heard English. The alien liked Tibetan music and savored strawberry ice cream. Through the captive alien's intervention, diplomatic relations were initiated between the U.S. and his race. Eventually, a treaty was signed, allowing the aliens free reign to carry out experiments on this planet. Pursuant to the treaty, large numbers of aliens moved to another location in the southwest U.S., specifically, a huge facility under Archuleta Mesa north of Dulce, New Mexico. But things went sour when it was discovered that the aliens had been abducting humans and had vats full of human body parts in their lair. Our military forces attacked the aliens, and eventually prevailed, but only after massive casualties on both sides.

Readers of *IUR* are not likely to believe any of this. Probably only some will have heard these stories. But they are taken as gospel by multitudes who follow the UFO controversy not from the pages of serious books and journals, but from Coast to Coast AM and similar radio talk shows.

And it would come as a shock not just to UFO specialists, but to the general public as well, to learn that these stories were concocted by the U.S. government and inserted into the UFO community and thus into the public domain by the U.S. government. Your tax money was put to work on a disinformation project that achieved amazing success.

This was a serious project, carried out systematically over a period of at least five years, and used as its primary modality "disinforming" a number of key figures, including ufologist William Moore, journalist Linda Howe, and of special importance to this discussion, an Albuquerque UFO enthusiast named Paul Bennewitz.

PAUL BENNEWITZ

Project Beta recounts the harrowing story of the central figure in this drama, Paul Bennewitz. Unlike the aliens in underground bases scenario, this part is all true. But it is so nearly impossible to imagine as true that I am forced to begin by saying that "Once upon a time" there lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in a fairly fancy house in a fairly fancy neighborhood, a man named Paul Bennewitz. And he was a successful businessman, married with two children, and an entrepreneur who started and ran Thunder Scientific, a firm selling humidity-sensing devices to various clients, including the military. He was studying for his doctorate in physics when the business suddenly became so successful that he quit school to devote full time to it.

Bennewitz had two hobbies. He flew light airplanes as a private pilot, which is expensive but neither controversial nor dangerous. His other hobby was UFOs. This turned out to be disastrous, leading to the near-collapse of his business, which was saved only when his sons were forced to take over, and the total collapse of his mental health culminating with three months in a psychiatric facility. Paul Bennewitz died a broken man.

His house was located near the fence separating Kirtland Air Force Base from the city of Albuquerque, and afforded a view deep into the military facility. It was around 1979 that he began to see strange lights flying in that vicinity. In a manner typical of his skills and scientist's mentality, he took still and motion picture photographs of the lights. Eventually, he accumulated 6,000 feet of movie film. At about the same time, he began detecting unusual radio signals, and he custom-built special electronic equipment to enhance and record these signals.

Strange lights

Strange lights and strange electronic pulses—his UFO obsession came into play, connecting the dots. The lights plus the radio signals equaled alien spacecraft. Or so he speculated, but Bennewitz took the logical and responsible step, and called Kirtland, eventually explaining the data he had collected to Major Ernest Edwards, commander of the security police contingent at the base. Edwards passed the problem on to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI), the unit responsible for counterintelligence.

As a consequence, Bennewitz was invited to the base for a meeting. A group of about 20 military and civilian officials heard his presentation, including the movies, still photos and the recorded radio signals.

Soon thereafter, OSI decided that they had to know more about this gentleman. From that point forward, Bennewitz was treated as if he were a Russian spy. He had mounted an extremely efficient data-gathering program including photography and detection of electromagnetic signals. Was he sending that data to Moscow? Or was he innocent, but were real spies intercepting his data? Could his network of UFO and cattle-mutilation enthusiasts harbor Soviet spies?

So far, so good, with Bennewitz and the Air Force acting responsibly.

But at this point a critical decision was made by OSI. Regardless of what they discovered about Bennewitz's status as a Russian agent, they would treat him as if he were one, or as if his information could be intercepted by a spy. (No hint of malign intent or connections was ever found.)

The alternative was to take Bennewitz aside, thank him for his diligence, but simply say that the lights and the signals were "ours." And please, Sir, turn off your radios and cameras, because your data could fall into the wrong hands. Why this second option was not taken remains a profound mystery.

Doty gets a job

The plan was to feed Bennewitz "disinformation," meaning false information mixed with true information. He would then communicate the lies to others, and eventually the KGB might waste valuable resources trying to confirm the lies, or even get reckless enough in their quest to be caught in the act of spying.

Author Greg Bishop tells us that no plausible explanation for the strange lights has been forthcoming. But his sources attributed the anomalous radio signals to a top-secret project at Kirtland that concerned attempts to neutralize Russian "spy satellites" by beaming specially coded transmissions at them. Ironically, we were trying to "disinform" the Russian satellites.

OSI assigned the Bennewitz job to a sergeant named Richard C. Doty, on his first assignment with OSI, fresh from counterintelligence school. Doty began by befriending Bennewitz, establishing a social bond, emphasizing his Air Force "intelligence insider" connections and special knowledge about UFOs. With Bennewitz entranced, Doty began to relate the preposterous "aliens in underground bases" lie concocted by OSI officials, which they continued to tell him in increasingly grisly elaborations until he was institutionalized and no longer available to listen.

Apparently, Bennewitz died in the firm belief that the lights he photographed were ET craft landing at Kirtland in cooperation with the U.S. government, and the radio signals were communications between the ET fleet and Air Force officials.

Useful idiots

As Doty fed the stories, and Bennewitz evangelized, spreading them far and wide, the lies were enthusiastically received by multitudes, mainly listeners to the very popular Art Bell and similar talk radio programs. It seems that in the intelligence profession people like Bennewitz are known dismissively as "useful idiots." This idiot proved exceptionally useful, and spawned a generation of equally useful idiots.

Eventually, personalities such as John Lear and William Cooper took these tales to new heights. Always the information was attributed to "highly placed sources in the intelligence community." But the real fountainhead was an otherwise nondescript junior sergeant, Richard Doty.

Soon after going to work on Bennewitz, Doty met and recruited mainstream ufologist William Moore, who had already been approached by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Moore was coauthor of the first book on Roswell and was an officer of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), based in Arizona. Doty's offer to Moore was simple: Go to work for us, and we will let you in on what the government really knows about UFOs.

Moore accepted the offer, and immediately began passing to Doty all he knew about other ufologists, as well as giving him access to the APRO files, and even going so far as to recruit APRO's secretary to provide instant notice of new developments to Moore, so that he could better serve Doty. Several years later, Moore found himself, innocently or otherwise, in the midst of a major UFO controversy, when a roll of film was received by his colleague Jaime Shandera. The film showed the MJ-12 documents, a briefing allegedly prepared for President Eisenhower describing UFO crash retrievals, stamped with top-secret security classification caveats.

In 1989, apparently having gotten the short end of this Faustian deal, Moore stunned the UFO community in a speech in which he told the details of his association with Doty and other intelligence community characters. Of particular interest here is that Moore admits that they knew Bennewitz was psychologically marginal to begin with and steadily deteriorating under pressure of the unremitting disinformation from Doty. Further, Moore said that Doty

and others had surreptitiously entered Bennewitz's house and rearranged the furniture in the living room as a deliberate ploy to further destabilize him.

Doty says his efforts to befriend Bennewitz had a very practical basis, in that if he invited him (Doty) and other intelligence operatives into his house, they could proceed without a search warrant. But elsewhere, Doty admits to what Moore claims, surreptitious entry into the Bennewitz house in the absence of Bennewitz and without permission.

Linda Howe is an Emmy-winning TV journalist and writer, and producer of three documentaries for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) about international child survival efforts, but she is best known to the UFO community for her books and television documentaries about the cattle mutilation controversy.

Howe produced a TV show about cattle mutilations that caught the eyes of the spooks, and Doty, having had such success with Bennewitz and then Moore, was tasked with disinforming her. Inviting Howe to his OSI office on the grounds of Kirtland AFB, Doty said that the Air Force was ready to disclose UFO secrets to the public, and wanted to use her as the conduit. She would be provided with motion-picture film of an alien craft landing at an Air Force base, of the aliens disembarking, and of a short conference between the aliens and government officials.

Then Doty gave Howe a document to read, but warned she could not make notes or keep it. Her recollection of the text is that it was much like the "MJ-12 Eisenhower Briefing" which reached the public much later. On the basis of these representations, and the seemingly official circumstances in which they were made, Howe approached HBO with a proposal for a UFO special. Naturally, HBO was enthusiastic. But of course Howe never got the film, and eventually gave up, correctly concluding that she had been deceived.

Howe has written extensively about this affair. Doty categorically denied the meeting ever took place, even in the face of an affidavit from Howe, and a challenge to Doty that he swear to his version. In a recent radio interview, Doty recounted the story, admitting the truth of Howe's account, and said by way of explanation that the plan was to dissuade Howe from making any UFO-related television shows! Obviously, the affair did no good for Howe's reputation as a journalist. But it did nothing to take Howe's attention off UFOs. In fact, Doty conceded the Howe project had to be counted as one of his few failures.

Richard Doty enlisted in the Air Force fresh out of high school, spent nine years as a military policeman, and then shifted to OSI. After his service at Kirtland, he was sent to an OSI office in Germany, where things went sour. Various versions have made the rounds, but it is almost certain that Doty was dismissed from OSI "for cause," and shipped back to Kirtland, where he ignominiously finished his Air Force career in the services field, reportedly in charge of the mess hall.

After retiring with 20 years of service, he was employed as a New Mexico state trooper. With regard to recent employment, he claimed to be an investigator for the Albuquerque District Attorney, and then that he was an attorney. But the New Mexico bar has no record of a Richard C. Doty.

Philip Klass focused his attention on Doty and persuaded the FBI to look into his activities, apparently in connection with the MJ-12 document. The existence of an official program of disinformation aimed at ufologists does not sit well with Klass, the premier spokesman for the position that UFOs are bunk. But if Klass found anything showing that the Bennewitz affair was carried out without sanction and authority, he never published it.

Doty's Cover-up Live on Art Bell

On February 27, 2005, Doty appeared as a guest on the Art Bell Coast to Coast radio program. This was his first public appearance, and Greg Bishop was on the air with him. The following are fragments from the program, which will give a flavor for what you will find in *Project Beta,* but these come directly from Doty.

[*Referring to the initial approach to Bennewitz*] "So we became very, very good friends, which is one thing you do in counterintelligence. You become friends with a person, you start abetting him. Yeah, and then eventually, you start feeding him information. And what we did was convinced him that what he was picking up wasn't anything classified from the base, but in fact it probably was of alien origin."

[*Bennewitz flew his private airplane to observe and photograph Archuleta Mesa, where Doty had said the alien base was situated. And Doty is able to gather other resources to enhance the illusion.*] "Paul was a pilot, he would fly up there, and he would photograph things. And he was convinced that the things that he was photographing was actually an alien base. So, what we did was we went ahead, fortified his thought by putting a fence up there around certain things, bringing in some helicopters from Fort Carson, Colorado, Army helicopters, which by the way, they were using that area as a training base, also. We had a couple of black helicopters."

[*Of interest perhaps to those with knowledge of the law is Doty's explanation of the utility of the disinformation campaign as a way around the "rules."*] "It was easier, it's easier for us to have done it that way than to get a warrant, search warrant, and a seizure warrant, seize all his property, seize his equipment. You know, what would that do? It would cause a lot of publicity. And the wrong type of publicity the base wanted."

[*Though he was the primary agent working on Bennewitz, Doty was only one of a team involved in the broader disinformation campaign, which ranged far from Kirtland.*] "Well, it just wasn't me. It was a team, I mean, I couldn't have done this all myself." [*And then referring to Linda Howe.*] "Well we, Linda was invited to Kirtland Air Force Base, and I was the primary agent. There were two other agents involved in it, not just me, but there's two others."

[*Art Bell challenges Doty: "I followed orders, but those orders never came down intentionally ordering me to lie to somebody."*] "Well, I didn't, I do feel the way you do, now, Art. I do, I really do. Then, I didn't. I mean, I didn't, I was a 28, 29-year-old. I didn't think of it that way. I was, it was an order, and it was an operation, and we were doing what we were told to do."

[*Doty is indoctrinated in UFO "facts" in preparation for his assignment to UFO disinformation projects.*] "They took me into a room and, at Air Force Special Security Office. There was a colonel and a civilian. There was two of us in there at that time to be briefed. They sat us down, and they gave us a slide presentation of, a short slide presentation of what we were going to get, and some other things. And then they showed us film, a 16-millimeter film, classified, coded word classified, which started, and it was a narration of Roswell. I mean this, what we were watching there was the actual film of the recovery operation in Roswell."

[*Doty meets William Moore.*] "I was tasked with, Bill Moore was recruited by another person within Defense Intelligence Agency, to provide, as a disinformation, he was recruited as an asset. That's what within the intelligence community they call a spy, a person that's working for you is an asset. And, Bill came to New Mexico, and I was tasked with contacting Bill after he had a, I think he did a radio clip on a talk show."

[*Art Bell asks, "How many of these big-time ufologists, names we would know, so to speak, have been approached by people who were in your line of work?"*] "I think probably a good number of prominent ufologists were approached at one time or the other. Some of them took the bait, some of them said, screw you, walked away."

[*On why the government continues to cover up the alien presence.*] "A lot of the disinformation is to protect technology. There's some things that we got from them, from the visitors that we're trying to protect. And that has to be safeguarded. And I agree with that. But I don't agree that just the mere fact that we were visited should be held up."

Paid to lie

Doty presents us with a concrete example of the paradox, "Everything I say is a lie." He was paid to lie, trained in the art of lying, and rewarded for his success in lying.

There is little doubt that Doty is less than perfectly truthful about the events in Germany that affected his military career. And he seems uneasy with his status on the lower rungs of the educational and military rank hierarchies. Several times in *Project Beta* we find him boasting about having lunch in the Officer's Club. Early during the Art Bell interview we heard this exchange: Bell: "You were officer rank, by the way?" Doty: [*pause*] "I was a Special Agent, yes."

I think it entirely possible that the introductory briefing Doty received was itself phony. It included details about the Yellow Book and the Red Book, presented to Doty as complete manuals describing the aliens and their culture, as well as film clips of the Roswell cleanup and the captured alien. At the risk of stating the obvious, headquarters would want to have its minions believing that story. It would insure the Dotys did their jobs with great zeal. And it is so full of preposterous details that the emergence of a whistle-blower like Doty would be insignificant. Who would believe him?

Great care must be exercised to distinguish between his account of the disinformation campaigns on the one hand, and his apparent belief in the substantive content of the disinformation he conveyed. There is ample external verification for the stories of disinformation campaigns against Bennewitz and Howe, per Doty's accounts in *Project Beta* and on the Art Bell program. But there is no external data supporting the Yellow Book scenarios.

In sum, the post-Air Force Doty is probably being honest. Almost.

Doty says his ultimate supervisor at OSI Headquarters was Colonel Barry Hennessey. When a colleague of mine asked Hennessey about Doty, Hennessey denounced him. But one must ask, where was Hennessey when he could have court-martialed Doty? Another supervisor was Colonel Richard Weaver, chief of counterintelligence during much of the Bennewitz period. Yes, this is the same Richard Weaver appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force to "investigate" the Roswell Incident.

An acquaintance of mine who spent a career as an intelligence official, and who has followed the UFO controversy with great interest and is well versed in the Bennewitz affair, was kind enough to offer me his opinion of Doty. I asked about Doty's credibility, but also commented on the questions raised by the existence of formal disinformation programs in the UFO field. He replied, "In fact, the only persons I have ever known to doubt Mr. Doty are persons not in government, and who don't know him." And in a general comment on the UFO problem, he stated, "My personal view on the entire area, come to after 30 years of analysis, is that the subject in its entirety is not a proper one for public discussion. To the extent the core story is true, it is legally protected by legitimate clearances and safeguards."

Failed opportunities

Much of what I have recounted so far appears in *Project Beta*, but the reader could do almost as well by consulting Jerome Clark's *The UFO Encyclopedia*, in the section he whimsically calls "The Dark Side." Unfortunately, author Greg Bishop has missed multiple opportunities to make this a significant book with broad appeal far beyond the UFO and conspiracy readerships. The subtitle of the book is "The story of Paul Bennewitz, National Security, and the Creation of a Modern UFO Myth." Three major topics, three golden opportunities to educate and fascinate the reader, but Bishop is never up to the task.

We learn next to nothing about Bennewitz the man, his

personality and how he changed over the years since the pivotal first encounter with Doty. Surely he had friends and business associates who could have fleshed it out. With a full social life and a thriving business at the outset, his decline could not have gone unnoticed.

Moore and Doty were the primary sources for this book. Bishop says he regularly lunches with Moore, and that he interviewed Doty at length over a long period. These men spent much time with Bennewitz and must have anecdotes to share that shed light on Bennewitz the human being, beyond Bennewitz the useful idiot that emerges monochromatically from the pages of *Project Beta*. Even stripped of the UFO context, the story of Paul Bennewitz is high drama, or would be at the hands of nearly any other author. Here he appears merely weird and wooden.

Bishop knows very little about ufology and his contempt for the field is evident throughout. That serious people take UFOs seriously seems to have escaped him. Thus any and all engaged in the field are painted as marginal characters. This ignorance infects the entire enterprise embarked upon by Bishop, which is to tell the story of systematic government lying about UFOs to one man, Paul Bennewitz.

Because he does not take UFOs seriously, Bishop fails to consider the broader issues. The book could have and should have dealt with the Bennewitz case as merely one in a long series of analogous operations, stretching at least as far back as the 1970s. In this way he could have fulfilled the promised exploration of "national security and the creation of a modern UFO myth."

Before and beyond Bennewitz

In addition to the instances of disinformation listed previously, it is useful to consider other cases in which individuals were approached by intelligence officers with supposed inside information about UFOs. Here is a partial list:

1972—Movie producers Robert Emenegger and Allan Sandler were approached by Air Force officials and asked to cooperate in a documentary in which the government would reveal the reality of ET craft. The producers met at the Pentagon with Colonel William Coleman and Colonel George Weinbrenner, who told about various saucer crashes, and showed film of captive aliens, survivors of a crash. A year later, the producers were invited to Norton Air Force Base, where they were told by the head of OSI at the base and Paul Shartle, chief of the audiovisual program, that film of the aliens would be made available for the planned documentary. Soon thereafter, the offer was rescinded, and the Air Force rebuffed further inquiries from the puzzled producers. In 1988 Shartle said he was told by the Air Force that the film in question was "theatrical footage for a training film."

Early 1980s—Colonel William Coleman again contacted Robert Emenegger, this time renewing the offer of film and other proof of the ET nature of UFOs, but only if Emenegger could convince ufologists Jacques Vallee and J. Allen Hynek to get involved. Coleman was retired from the Air Force when he made this contact. Hynek, and then Vallee, visited Norton AFB, where they were briefed by Brigadier General Glenn E. Miller, deputy director of the Defense Audiovisual Agency (DAVA), and the director, Major General Robert Scott. According to Vallee, the briefing by these senior officers sounded like the rantings of a contactee. Neither Vallee nor Hynek wanted any part of this obvious fraud.

1986—AF Captain Robert Collins, an associate of Richard Doty, contacted ufologist Leonard Stringfield, specialist in crash stories. Collins offered documents and an introduction to Lieutenant Colonel Ernie Kellerstrauss, who claims a wealth of "insider" information. Stringfield doesn't bite, so Collins moves on to Dr. Bruce Macabbee, who does engage in lengthy contact with Kellerstrauss, the thrust of which is Collins-Doty UFO history.

1987—UFO and stealth aircraft hobbyist Lee Graham was employed as an aerospace technician when he was approached by Bill Moore and given copies of the MJ-12 documents. Afraid he might lose his clearance and thus his job, Graham took the documents to his supervisors, requesting an investigation. Moore was untouched, but the Defense Investigative Service grilled Graham! Later, he was visited at work by FBI agent William Hurley, in company with Major General Michael Kerby. Both praised Graham for his work in disseminating the MJ-12 papers to the public. Kerby told him details of the stealth fighter that were still secret. A mystified and still frightened Graham cut off contact with Moore.

1987—Whitley Strieber received a provocative letter that included a telephone number. When he called, he was told, "We are in a war here, and you're on the front line," along with details about the alien invaders. Strieber hired a private detective, who traced the telephone number and mail drop to a Defense Department exchange in Colorado.

1988—Stringfield is suddenly and simultaneously contacted by no less than 10 "informants," all of whom have crashed saucer stories to tell.

1988—A television special titled "UFO Cover-up Live" is aired. Richard Doty and Robert Collins appear on camera, though with faces and voices distorted, giving the public the "truth" about the aliens in captivity, etc. The program is remembered mainly for the straight-faced claim that the aliens living in captivity like strawberry ice cream and Tibetan music.

Late 1980s—John Lear emerges with essentially the same story fed to Bennewitz, but with more grisly elaborations. He insists that his source is "a highly placed intelligence official." People who know Lear attest to his honesty and common sense in all areas other than UFOs.

Late 1980s—Film producer Robert Emenegger is approached again, and this time he is promised a meeting with a live alien.

1989—British ufologist and author Timothy Good is approached by the Ringling Brothers Circus with an offer to produce a traveling UFO display. Good was assured that

NASA and other government agencies would support the project. It came to nothing.

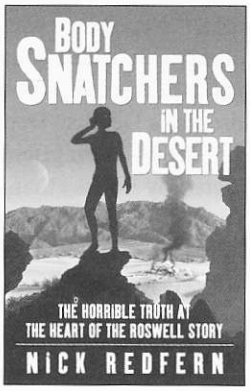
1989—Veteran *New York Times* journalist Howard Blum was preparing a book about the Walker family spy case when in the course of interviewing a senior NSA official he was given a strange tip. Although the tip had nothing to do with the Walker case, Blum was told that a high-level group within the intelligence community was studying the UFO problem, and that apparently they favored the ET explanation. Blum's book *Out There* recounts his trip through this UFO (and disinformation) never-never land. Doty is prominently mentioned in the book.

1995—Jenny Randles and several other British ufologists are told of the Alien Autopsy film and then watch a presentation of the film. It causes a sensation until serious questions are asked about its provenance. But television programs continue to show stills of the "alien" when introducing UFO programming.

1996—Ufologist Nick Redfern is approached by a British civil servant, beginning a series of referrals to other "sources" who combine to build a case for an alternative to an ET Roswell. In the new version, all is explained by nuclear experiments, Japanese super-balloons, and horrid experiments on human subjects.

Nick Redfern, *Body Snatchers in the Desert: The Horrible Truth at the Heart of the Roswell Story*. New York: Paraview, 2005. $14.00.

I will admit that when I first read *Body Snatchers* I thought Redfern had written a novel. Just flesh out the characters, add some sex and violence, and voila! And then he decided there was a bigger market in nonfiction Roswell. But Redfern is a known quantity in ufology, the author of a series of good books in the field. The alternative, which I think is almost certainly the true state of affairs, is that he is the latest victim of the relentless program to disinform ufology. When the book is read with this in mind, it becomes coherent, even humorous.



The real Roswell Incident

In Redfern's words,

> Forget flying saucers. Roswell had nothing to do with the crash of an extraterrestrial space vehicle. The truth is much darker and far more disturbing and has been covered up for more than half a century.
>
> What happened, in short, is this: in May 1947, an experimental aircraft that was born out of the revolutionary aviation research of the Horten brothers of Germany was test-flown from White Sands, New Mexico. The flight was part of a larger project begun in 1946 to examine the feasibility of both constructing and flying a nuclear powered aircraft. On board the vehicle were a number of physically handicapped people who had been found in the remnants of the Japanese military's Unit 731 laboratories and who were used in this dark and disturbing experiment—the purpose of which was to try to better understand the effects of nuclear-powered flights on an aircrew. The experiment ended in disaster when the aircraft crash-landed at White Sands, killing some of the crew.
>
> Two months later, in early July 1947, a second and similar vehicle was, once again, flown from White Sands. In this particular instance, the aircraft was affixed to a huge balloon array that was based upon advanced Fugo balloon designs developed in the closing stages of World War II by Japanese forces. The aircraft was piloted by a crew of Japanese personnel who had been specifically trained for the task and crashed near the Foster Ranch. . . .

Judging from the uproar on Internet chat sites (for example, www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates/), Redfern is being taken very seriously. Those who have been critical of the ET hypothesis for Roswell, and who now admit the deficiencies of the Mogul explanation, have rushed to embrace the new revelations.

Operation Paperclip

Operation Paperclip was the codename under which the U.S. intelligence and military services extracted approximately 500 scientists from Germany, during and after the final stages of World War II. Most of these were involved in the V-1 and V-2 rocket projects. The scientists and their families were spirited into the U.S. in great secrecy and without State Department approval. Some aspects of Paperclip remain classified, although there is a large literature on this fascinating episode.

Redfern claims that there was an analogous Japanese Paperclip project, comprised of two elements, (1) biological warfare and, (2) long-range manned balloon technology. Experts in both areas, whose hands were as bloody as those of the Nazi Paperclip crowd, were secretly brought to the United States and employed in research projects.

Rice-paper clip

The Japanese operated a truly hideous biological warfare laboratory using human subjects. This was known to the Allies and the project's files remaining upon capitulation were sent back to the U.S. At least a few of the project personnel were questioned at length in Japan. There is ample documentation of the existence of the project, the specific activities it encompassed, and the interrogation of the few principals who were found. A considerable litera-

ture produced by American and Soviet investigators is available on the Japanese Army's Unit 731. However, there is no documentation offered by Redfern for the pivotal claim that the U.S. imported Unit 731 personnel and put them to work, à la Paperclip.

Similarly, there was a Japanese long-range balloon project, but it consisted of primitive rice-paper balloons carrying several small incendiary bombs. These were the Fugo balloons, 32 feet in diameter, lofted into the stratosphere where they were pushed eastward toward North America by the prevailing jet streams. Over 9,000 were launched, with an estimated 300 arriving on this side of the Pacific Ocean, landing all the way from Alaska to Mexico, but few making it over the mountain ranges, and with almost no damage inflicted. As a military weapon, Fugo has to be one of the least effective on record. But apparently it will live forever as a prop in the search for explanations of UFO reports.

In Redfern's version, the Fugo designers were not hapless dead-enders, but brilliant engineers ready to launch "a huge balloon array that was based upon advanced Fugo balloon designs developed in the closing stages of World War II." But he provides absolutely no documentation even for the claim that they were designing such a device, much less that they were ready to launch one. Unlike Bill Moore, who proffered as documentation for his MJ-12 disinformation photocopies of the MJ-12 briefing document, Redfern leaves us bereft of even questionable documentation!

And this array really had to be huge, because if we credit Redfern, it was to have a crew of four, and would fly in the stratosphere just like the Fugo. Thus it would need oxygen and heat to keep the crew alive during the two or three-day flight. They would have no more control of the flight path than did the Fugos, so their deadly freight of microbes might be wasted on an Alaskan glacier or Mexican desert. The practical difficulties with this proposed balloon are such that it strikes me as ridiculous. Even in recent years, with modern technology available, manned balloons flying long distances are a very tricky proposition, one in which the rare success makes headlines.

Documentation?

But what really sinks Redfern is that, once again on a pivotal claim, he has absolutely no documentation. What he offers us is a single 1945 American newspaper article! The article quotes a Japanese military source in what is obviously desperate bravado, probably propaganda designed to lift domestic spirits by invoking a super-weapon.

The insertion of nuclear power and radiation experiments into the story is puzzling, and similarly flawed. The well-documented efforts to create nuclear propulsion came much later than 1947, there is no record of such experiments in the White Sands area, and what scientists wanted to know about the effects of radiation on humans was found without resorting to flying test subjects seated near radiation sources in an aircraft. Again, the studies of radiation on humans are the subject of extensive documentation, most of it commentary on the lamentable amorality of the researchers, but there for all to study. Redfern's version is not part of the record.

And finally, there is the matter of the "revolutionary aviation research of the Horten brothers of Germany." Redfern devotes an entire chapter (Hitler's Disks) to the Nazi super-weapons, a standard explanation for UFOs with its own fairly extensive literature, all of it based on rumors, none of it based on fact. The Horten brothers developed several models of flying wings, a design that never found significant practical application until years later. They were failed experimenters in their native Germany and later in England immediately after the war, where their "revolutionary" research was studied and found wanting. On the general topic of Hitler's Disks and so on, one should ask why, as the Red Army bore down on Berlin and the Americans formed a wall to the west, the German hierarchy did not deploy any of these purportedly revolutionary flying machines?

The flying wing, Redfern insists, was attached to the huge balloon, and was meant to be a means to glide to safety after spraying the Reds with deadly microbes or plutonium dust. The contraption got hit by lightning, got entangled, and crashed, ending the research program, but of course launching the Roswell Incident.

As a veteran of 36 years as a pilot with the U.S. Navy and two major airlines, including a stint as manager of flight engineering for one of the airlines, I have developed a feel for what a practical flying device can and can not be. The balloon-wing combination fails the common-sense test. Furthermore, there are sources of true expertise on the history of aviation that Redfern could have consulted, such as the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Smithsonian Institution. I will defer to experts like these to judge the fundamental feasibility of the Redfern balloon-wing and whether anything like it ever existed.

Sources?

By far the most interesting aspect of *Body Snatchers* are the sources for the Redfern scenario. As we have seen, he has nothing in the way of the documentation that would satisfy even the flexible standards of ufology, much less those of a historian. But he has a great wealth of help from voluble "insiders" who believe it is high time the real story of Roswell was told. They are quoted throughout the book without the slightest wink or nod.

Redfern: "From 1996 to 2004, I spoke with a number of military and intelligence whistle-blowers, all of whom related to me the details of a series of shocking post–World War II experiments undertaken on American soil." Here they are, with what little we are told about them by way of biographical information. (Before proceeding, it might be instructive to return to and review the short history of disinformation projects in the section titled "Before and

(continued on page 31)

VENUSIANS—*continued from page 18*

ever, the older man stood outside in mid-air, and he spoke, but his words were not coordinated with his lips; they seemed to emanate from the ship moments after the mouth movement. Helge was given a metal plate and instructed to wear it always. The being instructed him to go to the Bahamas (and specifically to the Bahamian island of Little Exuma) as their representative. Helge declined on the grounds that he could not speak English, was uneducated, and had a wife to care for. All to no avail—he was told that he had no choice in the matter.

Afterwards, Helge buried the plate, a small rectangle made of an aluminum-like material, about three inches wide by two inches thick, with three rows of symbols on one side. The following March, leaving it behind, he and Anna nonetheless went to the Bahamas to live. On the flight there, they noticed 14 men who, because of their black dress, they assumed were Catholic priests. The "priests," however, were nowhere in sight when everyone else left the airliner. Beyond that curious little incident, nothing of significance happened. Too embarrassed to return to their hometown, Helge and Anna moved south of Stockholm to an apartment arranged for them by a small UFO group which knew something about his experience. A wealthy member of the club offered to finance further trips to the Bahamas.

Helge drove to Uddevalla and dug up the plate. Heading back to Stockholm, he stopped at a gas station where an oddly dressed old man, sporting black slouch hat and black cape, approached and asked if he could accompany him. Helge agreed to take him. On the way the stranger revealed himself to be one of the "priests" on the flight, identifying himself as Father Rapas ("Ra Paz" in one account). He worked for the "overlords," as he called them, who had contacted Helge earlier. He directed Helge to return to the Bahamas and to bring along the plate this time. Rapas took over the driving, and Helge dosed off. When he awoke, the car was parked near its destination, and the driver was gone.

The couple stayed at a hotel in Nassau as 1967 turned into 1968. This time Helge was taken alone in a boat with two others to a small Bahamian island. Through an opening they entered a mountain, and inside it they found themselves in an extraterrestrial base where they observed several kinds of entities, including giants, dwarfs, and hermaphrodites. From then on, however, Helge would deal with the sorts of Venusians who occupy more typical contactee literature: beautiful and golden-haired.

Helge came back with orders to found a group to be called the New Generation, which was to attract young people to work for peace and justice. The core was the small UFO group that had formed around Helge, who showed its members what he alleged was a letter from Rapas. Its language was blunt to the point of rudeness: "We detest you. That is why we believe in the youth; they are the only ones whose hands are not soiled with the blood of others. . . . Your catchword shall be: Freedom from violence—from hunger—we are all brothers and sisters. . . . You who have supported [Helge] shall not be forgotten; you shall reap a hundredfold, but if someone hurts him or his devoted wife, I say, they shall be revenged sevenfold." Rapas also produced a list of 65 rules members were obliged to follow—or else. Helge himself was to stay in the background.

The New Generation fell apart within months. Its members, unenthusiastic from the start, felt anxious about the threats, and the group's wealthy benefactor expressed displeasure at being asked for large sums of money whose purpose was never explained to him. The New Generation did generate some coverage in the Swedish press, but its origins in space-contact claims were kept secret. Following the movement's collapse, Helge withdrew into seclusion and cut off ties with nearly everyone.

His adventures continued, and he traveled to the Bahamas and to Mexico doing the work of the spacemen (there were no women involved past the first incident in 1965). Sometimes he flew in spacecraft. He met other humans, including an American who was murdered soon afterwards; the space people explained that the man had either been a CIA agent or leaked information about their whereabouts to the agency. Helge hated and feared the overlords, characterizing his association with them a "hell." He was afraid to cut himself off from them because he was sure they would kill him if he did. The overlords lacked any sense of compassion; whatever their verbal assertions to the contrary, their actions showed they cared nothing about human suffering, even if it was occurring right in front of them. Helge felt like no more than an animal when he was around them. They never slept, as far as he could tell, and they lived on no more than liquid sustenance. They were either ignorant or disingenuous; when asked a question, they would not respond immediately but come back up with a vague answer 24 hours later. Helge came to suspect that they harbored sinister intentions on the human race, perhaps planning to infiltrate the population until they could take over.

At one point, noting that contactees such as Adamski and Howard Menger, who purportedly worked with good space people, also spoke of evil aliens who opposed them, Helge said he had fallen in with the wrong group. He died of a heart attack on October 23, 1977, at the age of 64.

The Swedish ufologist Håkan Blomqvist spoke with Helge only once, in 1973, and the phone conversation was brief. Helge said little more than that he was forbidden to talk about his experience. Over a period of years, Blomqvist pieced it together from informants who knew Helge. After the contactee's death he was able to track down the Stockholm doctor who had treated him between 1968 and 1972. The physician saw no evidence that Helge suffered from any mental disorder; yet he spoke from time to time of his dealings with extraterrestrials. Most of all, the doctor had the impression of a badly frightened individual.

Blomqvist interviewed Helge's widow Anna in June 1984. "Like her former husband," the investigator wrote, "she is very down to earth and practical. She confirmed almost all

the details of the contact and added several interesting pieces of information. What startled me somewhat was her almost total lack of interest in the subject of UFOs."

She recalled that her first meeting with an ostensible spaceman was during the third trip to the Bahamas. Insisting that he was supposed to meet one of his contacts there, Helge led her to a Nassau disco. There she encountered a short, peculiar-looking man with hypnotic eyes. At one point the stranger produced a photograph which he said depicted his family who lived on Venus (or maybe it was Saturn; Anna was not sure about the precise planet of residence). After that Anna stayed home while her husband traveled alone to the islands. He sometimes would be gone as long as a month, returning with a deep tan. The spacemen frequently came to the couple's place in Sweden, however, and she witnessed—at least peripherally—some of their interactions with Helge.

After years of monitoring developments to the best of his ability, Blomqvist was inclined to the view that everyone was sincere and that something very strange had indeed taken place. On the other hand, he confessed, "sometimes I get a feeling of unreality, like reading a science fiction novel." More specifically, Helge's tale has the resonance of a tale written by the late Argentine fantasist Jorge Luis Borges.

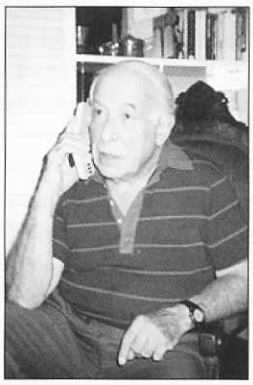
It also is consistent with a notion argued in the writings of the controversial occult journalist John A. Keel (b. 1930). In Keel's judgment Venusians and other ostensible space people exist as extraordinary entities but are not who they say they are. Beneath their friendly extraterrestrial exteriors, they are sinister "ultraterrestrials"—demons by another name—from an invisible realm Keel calls the "Superspectrum," known in traditional mystical lore as the astral or etheric world. In *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse* (1970) he puts it this way:

> Suppose a strange metallic disk covered with flashing colored lights settled in *your* backyard and a tall man in a one-piece silver space suit got out. Suppose he looked unlike any man you had ever seen before, and when you asked him where was he was from, he replied, "I am from Venus." Would you argue with him? Chances are you would accept his word for it. . . . Buried within the context of all the contactees' messages there are clues to an even more complex threat. A direct threat to us. . . . The endless descriptions of peaceful far-off worlds and shining cities of glass are only subterfuges.

Even those taking a more benign view of Venusians have been forced to bow to the reality that the planet cannot possibly support intelligent life. While Venusians no longer comprise the leading extraterrestrial faction in contact claims, they still make the rounds, almost always these days as channeling spirit entities rather than as physical saucer pilots. Contactees and their followers now say that the "Venus" of Adamski and his successors was and is a sort of parallel-universe—or higher-vibrational—counterpart to the planet of our lower-vibrational place on the vibrational scale. The moral of the story is that astronomical discoveries can't kill Venusians, but they can render them invisible. ✦

Philip J. Klass, 1919–2005

Philip J. Klass, aviation journalist and UFO debunker, died in a nursing home in Cocoa, Florida, on August 9, 2005. Cause of death, according to press reports, was prostate cancer. He had moved to Merritt Island, Florida, in 2003 after residing in Washington, D.C., for more than half a century.



Klass rose to prominence on the UFO scene with an article in the August 22, 1966, issue of *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, of which he was an editor. Klass theorized that UFOs are indeed extraordinary phenomena: a form of plasma (electrified air), some of whose manifestations are so dramatic that science has yet to document or understand them. He expanded this idea into a full-length book, *UFOs Explained* (1968). The theory was dismissed as scientifically unsustainable—pseudoscientific, to put it bluntly—by atmospheric physicists, including the University of Arizona's James E. McDonald and, later, a panel assembled by the Condon Committee.

The approach that Klass would bring to his UFO work became evident early on, after UFO proponent McDonald's debunking of Klass's plasma theory (which Klass refused to disavow, though he ceased to discuss it publicly ever after). He devoted the next 18 months to an effort to cause McDonald trouble and embarrassment, going so far as to pressure the Office of Naval Research to cancel a contract with McDonald for a scientific project unrelated to UFOs. Klass also launched, and distributed as widely as possible, a series of white papers, heavily italicized, intended to raise questions about McDonald's personal integrity—a method he would employ against other antagonists in later years, none more so than abductee Travis Walton.

With *UFOs – Explained* (1974) Klass introduced the style for which he would be best known: seeking to account for puzzling reports with explanations presented as prosaic, buttressed with accusations that witnesses were lying or exaggerating in the interest of financial gain or public attention. Other books in that vein followed. Klass became a hero to the emerging debunking movement and was a founding member in the 1970s of the influential Committee for the Scientific Explanation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). Not all fellow skeptics were taken with his approach, and some were publicly or privately

critical of what they viewed as his excesses, including a penchant for lacerating personal attacks on those who too firmly dissented from Klassian dicta.

I met Klass on a few occasions, the first of them at his condominium in Washington in September 1980, and found him a hard man to like, and not because we disagreed about UFOs. He simply struck me as a man not overflowing in social graces. Still, we corresponded at great length between the late 1970s and the early 1990s, when Klass angrily terminated the exchange.

I once wrote a comprehensive survey of his methods ("Klass vs. the 'UFO Promoters,'" *Fate*, February 1981). Even then, it seemed to some observers that ufology had been transformed into Klass's personal Satan; in some of his polemical excesses, he appeared to view ufologists as something like the personification of evil, once even depicting them as *de facto* allies of the Soviet Union because, like the Communists, UFO proponents judged some U.S. government pronouncements to be dubiously credible.

As I remarked in the *Fate* profile, "Klass never has missed an opportunity to portray himself as the martyr, the outcast whose sole interest is in finding and perpetuating Truth... while 'UFO promoters'—he can no longer bring himself to call them UFO proponents—cynically exploit public credulity and ignore his reasonable explanations of cases." In a sense Klass was less a UFO antagonist than a demonologist.

Some excitable UFO proponents returned the favor, with dark hints or overheated charges that he was actually a CIA agent tasked to cover up the reality of extraterrestrial visitation. Klass, of course, was no such thing. If anything, he suffered from too much sincerity. More sober ufologists provided point-by-point refutations of his explanations for prominent cases. But as with all crusaders, Klass barely noticed. Facts were not ends in themselves, only a means to a larger end, and if they did not serve, they were discarded.

He attracted an audience of those who, if they knew nothing else about UFOs, know they are nonsense, and they had Klass to speak for them. For years he published a newsletter which catered to UFOphobes and to those who like their sentences italicized, underlined, set in bold type, and ending in exclamation points—sometimes all at the same time. Though Klass more and more came across as a self-parodist, he was—and doubtless will remain—the hero of a movement of true-believing disbelievers. To the more open-minded, however, he will serve as the personification of the fanatic: one who, having lost sight of his objective, redoubles his efforts. —*Jerome Clark*

FUND FOR UFO RESEARCH

As a partner with CUFOS in the UFO Research Coalition, the Fund for UFO Research has long been engaged in the support of scientific research and education. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to: Fund for UFO Research, P.O. Box 277, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712.

KECKSBURG—*continued from page 9*

four states before entering the Pennsylvania skies; we have to rely on witness reports and amateur photographs for this part of the object's journey.

In order to address whether the object was a secret military or government experiment, we need a greater understanding of the technology our government possessed in 1965. Could the military have created devices with the capabilities that this object demonstrated? If this is something so secret that there is no accessible paper trail, there may not be any way to definitively answer this question, no matter how far-fetched the possibility becomes.

The more we learn about the Kecksburg case, the fewer the options become to explain the mysterious object, making the case all the more compelling. As Peter Sturrock, emeritus professor of applied physics at Stanford University, says: "In principle, we can prove a hypothesis not only by finding strong evidence in its favor, but also by finding strong evidence against every other possibility."

STONEWALLING AND THE NASA LAWSUIT

CFi's initial round of requests under the Freedom of Information Act, sent in January 2003, targeted over a dozen federal and state agencies for information on various aspects of the Kecksburg incident. In most cases, we received a "no records" response or were referred to other agencies.

NASA was unique, however, in that it denied us records that we knew were in the agency's possession as recently as eight years ago when materials were released to other investigators. We had asked NASA for documents on four specific items which we knew they had, including the "Fragology Files" from 1962 to 1967, described as "reports of space objects' recovery, [and] analysis of fragments to determine national ownership and vehicle origin."

In 1995, NASA sent Gordon a "records transmittal and receipt" listing the fragology files by name. However, he could not view the content of the files because NASA claimed that they had been missing since 1987. This was questionable, since the first list that Gordon received had a handwritten notation saying that the files were at the Federal Records Center in 1994. A subsequent copy of this same document released by NASA had the "1994" notation removed, when NASA informed CFi that the files were missing.

The list of fragology files includes the name "Richard M. Schulherr" as custodian of these files during the time of the Kecksburg incident. Schulherr, a NASA engineer, also served as NASA representative for Project Moondust in the 1960s, as indicated by a Moondust report signed by Schulherr and released through FOIA. Thus, along with the fragology files, we requested records on NASA employee Schulherr and on Project Moondust in general.

The highly secret Project Moondust would have very likely been involved with the Kecksburg retrieval if the

event occurred as witnesses report. According to an official 1961 Air Force Intelligence memo, classified at the time, Project Moondust's function was "to locate, recover, and deliver descended foreign space vehicles." The memo also states that the same Air Force Air Intelligence Squadron responsible for Moondust, which had field units stationed throughout the U.S., was responsible for the "investigation of reliably reported unidentified flying objects within the United States." It goes on to say that these functions involve "employment of qualified field intelligence personnel on a quick reaction basis to recover or perform field exploitation of unidentified flying objects, or known Soviet/Bloc aerospace vehicles, weapons systems, and/or residual components of such equipment."

Since we already had a document confirming that Schulherr was indeed on NASA's staff in the 1960s, a "no records" response to this request, among others, pointed to a "no effort" non-search on the part of NASA's FOIA office.

The appeal to NASA's rebuff, filed on behalf of CFi by Lobel, Novins & Lamont in May 2003, included five exhibits demonstrating that the agency had previously released the requested information, including documents on Project Moondust and Cosmos 96 which we had also requested, and that Schulherr did indeed work for NASA.

Among the exhibits was an intriguing news article about Schulherr's activities in 1968, when he "flashed fancy government credentials" and required the person in possession of a mysterious cone-shaped object found in the North Carolina woods to release it for testing in Washington. The reporter states that Schulherr was "a staff engineer" with NASA. In his letter about the analysis of the object—determined to be junk from a metal refining operation—Schulherr explains that the object was tested since "potentially it could have been a fragment of space hardware, a meteorite, or terrestrial material of uncommon shape." This illustrates his role at NASA only three years after the Kecksburg incident, particularly of interest since two witnesses reported seeing clearly identified NASA officials on the scene. (Unfortunately, we found out that Schulherr is deceased, and his family members declined to speak with us.)

In June, NASA granted CFi's appeal and remanded the request back to its FOIA office for a new search, at which time it committed to undertake responsive searches on an "expedited basis."

Since no response was provided, despite this promise, and after waiting a total of 10 months for information pertinent to the Kecksburg case, CFi announced its intent to file a lawsuit at a Washington press conference in October 2003. As had occurred the year before at our first press conference, this event was widely covered by national and international media, including Reuters. A piece on the national television channel MSNBC opened by stating, "You know stories in small towns often tend to take on a life of their own. . . . Well now the Sci Fi Channel is trying to get to the bottom of it all, going so far as to join a lawsuit against the government to reveal what it knows."

"I think its fair to say that we have truly entered the realm of science fiction in Washington, D.C.," commented John Podesta at this second press conference, "when it's fair game to disclose the identity of a clandestine CIA agent [reference to Valerie Plame] but not the records of an unexplained crash in Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, that occurred 38 years ago."

Within hours of the press conference, NASA informed our attorney, Lee Helfrich, that the agency would release 36 pages of documents immediately, an apparent attempt to thwart legal action. However, the material proved to be useless and unresponsive. The lawsuit, in which I am the plaintiff, was filed in Washington, D.C., on December 9, 2003, the 38th anniversary of the Kecksburg incident. "I'm hopeful that our lawsuit will be successful because NASA has given us a great record to show that it's recalcitrant and acting in bad faith," Helfrich said.

As of this writing, the court is still considering the case. Helfrich summarizes the status of the case as follows:

> The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia denied NASA's request for a ruling that its search for records was adequate, but gave the agency another opportunity to make its case. NASA took the court up on its offer and filed new affidavits of agency officials, under penalty of perjury, to support its claim that the FOIA search was exhaustive. Kean immediately filed papers with the court highlighting that NASA's new affidavits contained factual representations that were flatly contrary to the facts relied upon by NASA in support of its original motion. The court is now considering this new round of information.

The lawsuit against NASA could be the first of several against government agencies, including the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and the Department of Defense, which continue to stonewall efforts to obtain records on the Kecksburg incident under the Freedom of Information Act.

Another amazing example of recalcitrance occurred when we sent a second request to the U.S. Army following its initial unwillingness to take action. We provided the Army with newspaper articles that clearly state the Army was on the scene, along with excerpts from a detailed radio broadcast revealing the same. We included signed witness statements of encounters with Army personnel, some stating that soldiers pointed weapons at civilians, and descriptions of clearly marked Army vehicles. Reporter Robert Gatty's account stated that he saw 10 or more Army personnel preventing people and reporters from entering the area where the object was believed to have landed, and that he questioned some of them.

We documented all of this for the Army, but it made no difference. Helfrich points out that the Army regulation on specificity advises the public to provide "descriptive information" that "is event related and includes the circumstances that resulted in the record being created or the date and circumstances surrounding the event the record cov-

ers." CFi's information established the participation of the Army, including military personnel from the U.S. Army Support Detachment in Oakdale, in a publicly acknowledged investigation of a landed object on December 9, 1965, at 4:45 p.m. near the town of Kecksburg. Even so, the Army FOIA office told CFi that we had not described what we wanted with sufficient specificity to enable it even to begin a FOIA search!

Throughout this process, the archival research firm History Associates conducted extensive searches at federal records centers and other government and military repositories outside the Washington, D.C., area. Files at some of these locations are not publicly available and can only be examined through permission of the agency that created them, which of course makes access difficult, and in some cases they may be classified. History Associates was able to provide us with specific accession numbers for files in various repositories that we then presented to NASA and the Army. These other facilities may contain the requested documents that FOIA offices have not been able to locate, but the process of acquiring them is laborious and costly, if it's possible at all.

To this day, no government agency other than the Air Force (in Project Blue Book) has even acknowledged that anything took place on December 9, 1965, in Kecksburg, let alone released any relevant information about the incident.

The smoking gun

Perhaps the most important breakthrough since I became involved in the case took place back in the Kecksburg woods, at the crash site that Romansky and Bulebush had independently shown to Stan Gordon years earlier. In the spring of 2003, the Sci Fi Channel brought geomorphologist and geoarcheologist J. Steven Kite and Professor of Forestry Ray R. Hicks, both of West Virginia University, to the site.

Kite conducted an investigation with two archeologists from the Department of Geology and Geography to search for "physical evidence of landscape disturbance or artifacts that might be associated with the 1965 event," supplemented by a magnetometer and radiation survey.

Kite did not find any relevant surface disturbance or artifacts associated with the incident and could offer no confirmation that anything exceptional occurred at the site in 1965. "The evidence was either so meager as to be easily overlooked, or was subsequently obliterated or obscured by natural or artificial processes," he stated. He noted that the methods of his team "would have been sufficient to discern any digging, bulldozing, or burial done to 'cover-up' the evidence of the 1965 event. In fact, a cover-up would be easier for trained geomorphologists to identify than the evidence of a low-energy impact event." Gordon and others have noted that since the object landed in a stream bed with water running through it intermittently, erosion would make detection of soil disturbance extremely difficult after all these years. In any case, Kite pointed out that no past event can be ruled out based on negative evidence.

However, Kite went on to make another important observation based on his study. "The obvious lack of widespread destruction from the 1965 impact allows one possible explanation to be eliminated as a cause of the December 1965 observations: high-velocity impact by a large, intact satellite or meteorite. At least one account related an object 'about the size of a Volkswagon' being hauled away from the site during the night after the event. If such an object, especially a dense meteorite, impacted the earth at high velocity, the impact would have created havoc for the surrounding forest vegetation and left a pronounced impact crater." He notes that the vegetation and landscape he studied "record neither such a high-velocity impact nor the major reclamation effort that would be required to cover up the evidence of such an event."

Ray Hicks, on the other hand, made a significant discovery through his study of the trees, providing solid physical evidence that something came down. With the help of witness John Hayes, who lived next to the location in 1965 and observed tree damage at the time, Hicks was able to find the damaged trees which matched photographs of large broken branches taken by Gordon at the same location in the mid-1980s. The falling object is believed to have made this damage.

"I utilized the photographs as a primary source of information and based on the tree species, as recognized from the photos and the crown architecture, I was able to find the exact trees pictured in one photograph," Hicks explained in a written statement.

He presented his findings following the airing of a November 2003 Sci Fi Channel documentary making the new discoveries public for the first time. He writes:

> The trees were approximately 70 years of age, which would make them approximately 40 years old in 1965. The growth pattern was determined for the trees by observing the width of annual rings. One of the trees in the photo was a black cherry which had it's top broken out (presumably after being struck by the object). Unfortunately this tree was now hollow from decay that was probably a result of the wound. This made it impossible to look at the growth rings of this tree. But an adjacent undamaged black walnut tree, also pictured in the photo, did display a slight increase in growth for a few years following 1965. This would be consistent with the fact that the adjacent black cherry tree was broken in 1965, since it would provide additional growing space for the undamaged walnut tree.

Hicks attempted to reconstruct the most likely trajectory path of the object using plastic flagging. He states:

> One of the trees (a white ash) along this path displayed a forked and crooked stem at a height that would be consistent with the assumed trajectory. We obtained an increment core from the tree and again looked at the growth pattern of the rings. There was a dramatic

> reduction in growth of this tree that appeared to begin in 1967 or 1968 and lasted for about 20 years. If I missed one or two rings in the count, it would put the year of reduced growth at 1966. This would be consistent with this tree being damaged in 1965. An adjacent ash of similar age and size, but outside the assumed trajectory was cored and it did not display the dramatic growth reduction of the ash that was in the path. This would suggest that the reason for the dramatic growth reduction of the tree in the path was not due to a climatic event, such as drought, but was probably due to some specific injury to the tree.

Standing in the woods at the time, and speaking to the producers of the documentary, Steven Kite spontaneously commented on the significance of his colleague's discovery. "The damage that Ray [Hicks] identified formed a pattern. It formed a clear trajectory. It is a reasonable trajectory from some of the other observations that were made. And the real nice thing about it, it has a date to it: 1965. And since there is obvious, visible damage, that is a smoking gun so to speak, as to what caused the decrease in growth of that individual tree."

The Air Force stance that nothing came down is now even more untenable. Trees do not tell tall tales or engage in group hallucinations. The saying has it that we often can't see the forest for the trees, but in this case, it's the trees that show us the true nature of the forest.

What was the importance of the object that caused the military to rapidly respond to the tiny village of Kecksburg? Who authorized soldiers to brandish weapons at local citizens approaching the landing site? For how long will the citizens of Pennsylvania be denied information that is rightly theirs under American law? We still don't have the answers to these and many other questions, despite the four decades that have passed. The U.S. government may never reveal the true identity of the Kecksburg object, but the investigation has been well worth the effort—and it's not over yet. ✦

EX-MINISTER SPEAKS AT UFO CON

Paul Hellyer, Canadian Minister of National Defence from 1963 to 1968, announced in September that he believes UFOs are extraterrestrial visitors and that some governments—the United States at least—know all about it and are covering up. He also believes American scientists have re-engineered alien wreckage from the UFO crash at Roswell, N.Mex., in 1947 to produce modern technical marvels.

Hellyer spoke September 25 at a conference sponsored by MUFON Central Canada and held on the University of Toronto campus. He described a UFO sighting he had while camping out with his wife and some friends: "A bright light appeared in the sky and appeared to zig and zag across the horizon." He added that he started taking the issue much more seriously after watching ABC-TV's UFO special with Peter Jennings in February 2005.

DOTY—*continued from page 25*

Beyond Bennewitz." The parallels with Redfern's encounters with his sources are obvious and depressing.)

Redfern was first approached in London by a man with British Home Office credentials who claimed to be a UFO buff and who gave him the broad outlines of the Japanese Paperclip Roswell tale. But there was no follow-up, and Redfern forgot about it until five years later, when he was approached by . . . The Black Widow.

"Because she does not want her identity revealed, for reasons that will shortly become apparent, I will refer to her as the Black Widow. From the mid-1940s to the early 1950s, she had been assigned to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Tennessee, and she said she had firsthand knowledge of the Roswell mystery that I 'might find interesting.'" She approached him after a speaking engagement in Los Angeles in 2001: "Those bodies—the Roswell bodies—they weren't aliens," she said quietly. "The government could care less about stories about alien bodies found at Roswell—except to hide the truth. Those bodies were Japanese people."

The widow has some of the picture, but not all. Mostly, she is an expert on radiation experiments at Oak Ridge circa 1947, but drops important clues throughout the book as the story develops. Somehow, she picked up a great deal at the Oak Ridge water cooler, especially that there were three classified balloon flights at White Sands in May, June, and July 1947, and that at least two were disasters.

The Black Widow soon sends friends, such as "Bill Salter," described as "a former employee of the Psychological Strategy Board" seconded to Oak Ridge to do counterintelligence work. Salter has much to add to the Widow's story.

And then we meet "Al Barker," who worked with the Army's Psychological Warfare Center. Here is what Barker has to say: ". . . if the Soviets uncovered the truth about the Nazi and Japanese links to the 'high altitude idiocy' at White Sands and elsewhere, this would have caused major repercussions between the United States and its allies in the postwar world. Hence the cover story put out by the Psychological Strategy Board and, later, by the Army's Psychological Warfare Center that the bodies were from a crashed UFO in case the Soviets, the press, UFO researchers, and America's allies came snooping." (Never mind that nobody thought Roswell was ET until 1978, and the public didn't hear about that until 1980. This tiny fact demolishes the credibility of Barker's story.)

And then there is the main informer, "the Colonel," a man who buttonholed Redfern at the Henderson, Nevada, UFO conference in 2003. "Having spent fifteen years operating deep within the heart of American intelligence, the Colonel claims that in 1969, while working with the Defense Intelligence Agency, he read a top-secret document that, as far as he is concerned, laid to rest the tales about flying saucers and alien bodies recovered from the desert of New Mexico in the summer of 1947 and told the true story about the Roswell events." And further, not exactly to our surprise,

we learn that "Like Al Barker, Bill Salter, and the Black Widow, however, the Colonel maintains that the Roswell and other 1947 events were given a 'crashed UFO cover' to hide research that was linked with classified high-altitude balloon experiments and the Nuclear Energy for Propulsion of Aircraft project." (But per my remark above, this cover did not exist.)

All of Redfern's informants have done their homework. The Colonel is certainly well-read on Roswell. But what emerges is a mass of slightly twisted interpretation of the Roswell data, always presented so that the nonexpert would find it persuasive, and always supporting the Redfern Japanese super-balloon scenario. Thus the truly mysterious "memory metal" reported by witnesses becomes merely the balloon's polyethylene-plus-metal coating, though this has been drop-kicked by researchers who saw the section in the Air Force's Project Mogul report that discussed the unfortunate fragility of polyethylene.

The Pentagon Papers example

When challenged to supply the real names and backgrounds of his informants, Redfern protests that his publisher's attorneys forbid such disclosure. Though that strains credulity, at the very least, each "source" should provide an explanation why, especially at their advanced age, they refuse to go public.

In 1971, military analyst Daniel Ellsberg gave the *New York Times* 7,000 pages photocopied from top secret Defense Department documents. These papers documented U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1945 through 1968 and showed that senior government officials, including the President, had systematically lied to the American public about Vietnam. Ellsberg became the object of an FBI manhunt and was charged with 12 felony counts after he gave himself up, but his case was dismissed in 1973 on the grounds of governmental misconduct against him.

The point is, Ellsberg remained a free man, even having admitted perpetrating a security violation hugely damaging to the executive branch, and in fact became a hero in many quarters, today holding a prestigious teaching position. When evaluating Redfern's sources one must ask, what are they saying that would result in any retribution at all, 60 years after the fact? And why don't they go to the *New York Times* with their story, instead of planting it in the quarantined intellectual ghetto of ufology? Ellsberg did not take the Pentagon Papers to Jane Fonda or some minor anti–Vietnam War group. (And of course the same goes equally for the rest of the disinformers, from the MJ-12 hoaxers, to the Alien Autopsy hoaxers, to the "we have a film of aliens landing at Holloman AFB" hoaxers.)

FBI and MJ-12

There is valuable information in the book about disinformation. His chapter detailing the FBI's dealings with the MJ-12 documents is must reading. Here he points out that the FBI confronted OSI about the documents, and quotes an FBI Headquarters message to the Dallas Field Office: "The Office of Special Investigations, U.S. Air Force, advised on November 30, 1988, that the document was fabricated. Copies of that document have been distributed to various parts of the United States. The document is completely bogus."

However, Redfern follows this by saying he was told by an OSI agent that they had no records pertaining to MJ-12 or any investigation of the documents. Redfern thinks this is impossible and asks indignantly, "How was AFOSI able to determine that the papers were faked if no investigation on their part was undertaken?" Redfern is either inert to the obvious, or playing a game with the reader. Nick, OSI did not need to investigate anything. They are the ones who faked the MJ-12 documents. When pinned down by an exasperated FBI, they spilled the beans. Of course they lied to you, because they have been lying to your kind for the last 30 years.

A colleague pointed out to me the strange pattern in which major UFO disinformation is first released in England, and only then in the U.S., and he thinks this may have something to do with the law concerning the scope of intelligence agency fiddling with American citizens. In addition to Redfern's introduction to the "real" Roswell story by a British Home Office man, Jenny Randles and others in England first heard details of the infamous Alien Autopsy film. The MJ-12 documents were first released by British ufologist Timothy Good, who apparently received them before Jaime Shandera got them in his U.S. mailbox.

Some group within the intelligence community deeply cares about hiding Roswell. They cared enough to orchestrate the 1993 investigation concluding that it was a Mogul balloon array, plus crash dummies. Now they care enough to mount this truly elaborate fraud, further blowing smoke in the eyes of the press, the legislature, and the public. If the reader will understand that this is the genesis and guiding principle of *Body Snatchers in the Desert*, he will be richly rewarded for the small price of the book.

And he will little wonder that Peter Jennings so easily dismissed Roswell as a myth. ✦

SPHERICAL UFOS IN ARIZONA

At 10:30 a.m. on September 17, 2005, eyewitness D.W. was at his home on 31st Avenue in Peoria, Arizona, when he saw something strange approaching from the east. "Looking east, I could see a bright object in the sky," he reported. "The orb was shiny. Seven other objects appeared around it. They stayed in the same spot for about 15 minutes and then moved to the left quickly, to face north. They moved left to right and right to left, almost hitting each other, and then got higher until they were all out of sight. . . . There was no sound at all, and they were above the (other conventional) aircraft."—UFO Roundup, September 28, www.ufoinfo.com/roundup/.